APPENDIX 14: CONSULTATION WITH HORIZON LEISURE TRUST:

HAVANT LEISURE CENTRE

Havant Leisure Centre originally opened in 1974 as a simple swimming pool. The dry sports facilities were added in 1982 and an indoor bowls centre in 1986. The existing facilities comprise:

- Swimming pool – 25m x 6 lanes with small, integral diving area and learner area
- Learner pool
- Sports hall – 8 badminton courts
- Squash court - glass backed with viewing gallery
- 160 station fitness gym located in converted indoor bowls centre
- Toning Table Studio within the gym
- Small hall
- Exercise studios – x 2
- Large indoor children’s Soft Play facility
- Cycle Studio
- Sauna and Steam rooms
- Creche
- Café / Bar and function room
- Conference Room Office and meeting space
- Reception areas, offices and changing rooms

Provision of the fitness gym, cycle studio, toning table studio and indoor children’s soft play facilities have been directly funded by HLC.
WATERLOOVILLE LEISURE CENTRE

The centre opened in 1991 with a 25m pool, learner pool, small fitness gym, sauna and steam rooms. The centre is home to the successful regional level Havant and Waterlooville Swimming Club and hosts frequent large-scale galas. Dry facilities have been added in very recent years through direct investment by HLC. The £3 million investment opened in June 2015 and lead to a 15-year lease extension. The current facilities comprise:

- Swimming Pool – 25m x 8 lanes competition pool with seating capacity for 200+
- Learner Pool
- 140 station fitness gym split on 3-levels with access lift
- Large indoor children’s soft play facility
- Exercise studios – x 2
- Sauna and Steam rooms
- Café
- Reception areas, offices and changing rooms

An additional S106 agreement has been allocated to the centre, or the provision of additional dry-side facilities.

Contractual Relationship with Havant Borough Council

The original arrangement between HBC and HLC was based on two 30-year leases with associated management agreement. This has recently been extended by 15 years with expiry now in 2042. The extension was agreed on the basis of the multi-million-pound investments provided by HLC (and no HBC contributions) for sustainability and security of tenure purposes.

Originally the management agreement included payment of an operating subsidy to the Trust. This was gradually reduced and since 2007/08 there has been a “zero operating subsidy” arrangement in place. A partnering agreement was introduced in 2007/08 although its current status is under review.

The leases include a separation of property responsibilities with the council retaining landlord responsibility for maintenance of the structure and maintenance and replacement of plant. HLC is however responsible for building and plant maintenance for all the new builds although HBC insures all of the buildings.

The council has asked HLC to take over all responsibilities with regards to building and plant maintenance and building management. The Trust is supportive of this in principle subject to agreement of a package of changes currently being negotiated with HBC and is willing to do so as the aged buildings have been well maintained in the past and are in a reasonably good condition. Discussions with the council on this matter are ongoing but are expected to be concluded in the near future.
There are no specific requirements with regards to programming in the lease with the council. There are no KPIs by which performance is measured. The lack of any council or borough-wide leisure strategy means that the Trust has freedom to follow emerging national leisure trends and local patterns of participation. The council has been appreciative of the standard and quality of service provision provided by HLC to the community and evidenced by the significant expansion in facilities and activities and rise in annual attendances and customer service levels.

There is a contractual stipulation that the trust maintains the QUEST accreditation.

It is a source of frustration that the Trust has not been asked to play a role in delivery of HBC’s commitment to improve the health of the local community and the level of public support and appreciation in this important community service could be better.

LOCAL SPORTS PARTICIPATION

The following points with regards to sporting participation in and around Havant were made during our conversation.

The Trust has experienced a significant downturn in badminton and five-a-side football with much of the latter business transferring to specialist commercial facilities (e.g. Goals, ROKO). This has, in their view, helped negate the need for a sports hall in Waterlooville.

There has been some reduction in casual swimming but not as large as reported nationally.

The Trust has a very active learn to swim (swim school) programme with a waiting list at improver levels.

Over the past 3-years both Horizon’s gyms have been voted as the best in the area by its members in competitions run by the local paper. The gym at Havant has been one of the six finalists in the national gym of the year competition for the past 3-years. Gym membership and participation levels have grown over the past 3-years but are now beginning to plateaux.

There is a healthy and volatile local fitness gym market with a range of facilities across the market. The market is becoming increasingly price sensitive and compact with new facilities opening in the catchment areas regularly.

The Trust runs a GP Referral Scheme and has a “stepping stone to health” initiative in place with local GPs to encourage sedentary, injured and overweight people to visit the centre and use facilities such as the new toning tables.
Sport England and Hants FA have jointly helped to fund the forthcoming Front Lawn Recreation Ground leisure complex in the deprived Leigh Park area of Havant. This is a £1.3 million social centre and floodlit 3G pitch scheme which will be managed by the Hants FA. The Trust tendered for the management contract to operate the complex but was not selected.

There is some public access to indoor and outdoor school sports facilities.

There are no significant gaps in local leisure provision. The Trust has reservations about the need for traditional capital facilities such as sports halls and swimming pools but recognises the need for more varied leisure facilities to meet the needs of the growing population to satisfy exercise, recreation, social and healthier life styles.

The Trust’s objective is to ensure that both centres are fully developed and continually adapted to meet the needs of the community to enable maximum use of the assets and increased participation levels.

To help achieve this objective accessible and affordable admission charges are essential and a necessity for continual capital investment to ensure long-term sustainability.

There have been calls from the community for a ten-pin bowling alley and cinema at Waterlooville on land zoned for leisure (and now retail) and in general an indoor tennis club has failed to materialise and there is currently no major hall for the performing arts and events.