

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

To: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: BEST VALUE SERVICES REVIEW - SPORTS CONTRACTS
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES		
Date: 10 March 2001	Ref: PJ/MMcM/KN	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines the review process undertaken in relation to the Sport & Recreation Service (Sport Contracts). This report comprises the main body of the review and the Improvement Action Plan Appendices. All appendices are listed at the end of this document and are available in the department.
- 1.2 The report provides both the focus and the impetus to improve various aspects of the current service.
- 1.2 However, the challenge of securing a best value service is significant and ongoing, and the Improvement Action Plan derived from the audit of the service will in the future establish a clear way forward to deliver service improvements on an ongoing basis.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Best Value aims to provide a balance in relation to the quality and cost of the delivery of services, and to put in place a process of continuous improvement. In so doing, the process will provide a method for checking the satisfaction of stakeholders / customers / service users and securing value for money on their behalf.
- 2.2 The Sport & Recreation Service (Sport Contracts) was identified for Service Review in year three of the review rota as part of North Lanarkshire Council's Best Value submission to the Scottish Executive. The service was featured in year three, since it had been the subject of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation embodied in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1988 as a defined activity.
- 2.3 Sport & Recreation Operations are responsible for the operation and management of all the Authority's sport and recreation facilities, with the exception of the Time Capsule, managed by "The Time Capsule Trust Limited", and the Broadwood Stadium managed as a separate Company.
- 2.4 The reorganisation of Local Authorities in 1996, brought together six Sport & Leisure Management Contracts, five of which are managed by the Sport & Recreation Operations Section. The sixth Contract is managed by The Time Capsule Monklands Trust Ltd. The task of therefore bringing the operational procedures of the disparate groups together was a complex

task. Issues such as different conditions of service for staff, different charges for similar activities, and different methods of managing the financial accounts all had to be addressed very early stage.

It was also felt that the harmonisation of this Section's procedures and policies had to be tackled quickly to establish a corporate approach, whilst ensuring the staff were made fully aware of the new organisation of which they were now a part.

- 2.5 A significant part of the sport and recreation service consists of a Sport & Leisure Management Direct Service Organisation (DSO). However, the management of facilities exempt from CCT legislation are also the responsibility of the Sport Operation Section.
- 2.6 The Service Review requires that the 'contracted' element of the service be reviewed. However, due to the work undertaken to date to bring together all the sport and recreation facilities under the general management of one Section, it was felt that the Service Review should address both the 'contracted' and 'non-contracted' elements relevant to both spheres of operation.
- 2.7 The Sport & Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule Monklands Trust Limited are specifically responsible for a wide range of facilities which include swimming pools, ice rinks, sports halls, football pitches, bowling greens and athletics tracks. There are 14 major indoor, 5 major outdoor and 252 other outdoor facilities currently providing a Sport & Recreation service to North Lanarkshire's 327,940 residents.

3. DIRECTORY OF FACILITIES

- 3.1 The facilities currently providing a Sport & Recreation service to North Lanarkshire's residents are as follows: -

Kilsyth Swimming Pool, Kilsyth
Tryst Sports Centre, Cumbernauld
Palacerigg Golf Course, Cumbernauld
Ravenswood Sportsfields, Cumbernauld,
Iain Nicolson Recreation Centre, Muirhead
Coatbridge Golf Course & Driving Range, Coatbridge
Kirkwood Sports Barn, Coatbridge
Coatbridge Outdoor Sports Complex, Coatbridge
Columba Sports Complex, Coatbridge
The Time Capsule, Coatbridge
Airdrie Leisure Centre, Airdrie
John Smith Pool, Airdrie
Aquatec, Motherwell
Keir Hardie Centre, Motherwell
Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex, Bellshill
Birkenshaw Sports Hall, Uddingston
Wishaw Sports Centre, Wishaw
Houldsworth park, Wishaw
Shotts Leisure Centre, Shotts
13 Outdoor Bowling Greens (non-leased)
3 Synthetic Tennis Courts
66 Sportspitch Pavilions and 7 Shared Pavilions
170 Sports Pitches (48 blaes, 117 Grass & 4 Synthetic)

- 3.2 The facilities cater for a variety of customers ranging from families participating in a leisurely swim to competitive international athletes. The service also provides for toddlers birthday

parties through to the more mature over 50's aerobics classes. Many visitors, from throughout the country, will also utilise our facilities when they compete in special events or simply visit as tourists. In the financial year 1999/2000, the sport and leisure facilities attracted over **2.8 million customers** and generated approximately **£4.2 million income**.

4. BUDGETARY REDUCTIONS

4.1 The financial situation confronting the new Authority in 1996 affected the service significantly in the years immediately following reorganisation. Financial reductions were made to the expenditure budgets and the level of service provided has consequently been adversely affected over the last four years. The total financial reduction and amendment to the service since 1996 amounts to **£1,234,133**, resulting in the closure of cafeterias, the reduction of opening hours for various activity areas, and, in some cases, reduced opening hours for entire facilities.

4.2 The reductions and amendments to the service are detailed below: -

1996/97	Budget shortfall (S&R Ops)	£294,809
	Budget reduction (Time Capsule)	£160,000
1997/98	Budget shortfall/reduction (S&R Ops)	£504,309
	Budget reduction (Time Capsule)	£ 77,000
1998/99	Budget reduction (S&R Ops)	£ 41,605
	Budget reduction (Time Capsule)	£ 36,410
1999/00	Budget reduction (S&R Ops)	£ 27,500
2000/01	Budget reduction (S&R Ops)	£ 92,500

TOTAL £1,234,133

4.3 Those reductions in the level of service have resulted in the following: -

Aquatec Ice Rink	- reduction in opening hours
Aquatec Outdoor Pool and Flume	- reduction in opening hours
Aquatec Café	- closure
Birkenshaw Sports Hall	- reduction in opening hours
Wishaw SC Health Suite	- reduction in opening hours
Wishaw SC Planet Pulse Gym	- reduction in opening hours
Shotts Leisure Centre Café	- closure
Houldsworth Park	- reduction in opening hours
Coatbridge Golf Driving Range	- reduction in opening hours
Time Capsule Swim Zone	- reduction in opening hours

4.4 The number of contracted staff within the Sport & Recreation Operations Section has also been reduced from 378 in 1996/97 to 332 in 2000/2001, which represents a reduction of 12% in the establishment. The majority of the posts were deleted due to natural wastage, however, service reductions led to compulsory redundancies in March 2000.

4.5 A restructuring of the managerial and professional staff structure of the Time Capsule was also implemented in December 1999, which resulted in various posts being deleted from the establishment, and financial savings being achieved.

4.6 Due to budgetary constraints many other operational difficulties affected the income generating abilities of the service. The main examples were the withdrawal of membership schemes, the launch of the 'Passport to Leisure' scheme allowing a 50% discount, inherited building defects, the responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of the facilities being transferred, and the general lack of capital investment in the facilities.

- 4.7 Due to budgetary constraints of the Council, other operational difficulties affected the income generating abilities of the Service.
- 4.8 The principle issues are set out in more detail as follows: -
- 4.8.1 The withdrawal of existing membership schemes within Cumbernauld, Monklands and the Time Capsule led to a reduction in income and a loss of information on the customer base which could have proved to be of benefit from a marketing perspective.
 - 4.8.2 The Department launched a 'Passport to Leisure' scheme, which allowed a 50% discount on all individual activities for disadvantaged groups and employees. Whilst the approach was wholly laudable, it nevertheless resulted in a loss of income to facilities.
 - 4.8.3 Building defects inherited from the predecessor Authorities within relatively new facilities led to closures, and a subsequent loss of revenue, whilst they were being repaired.
 - 4.8.4 The responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of the facilities was removed from the Sport & Recreation Operations Section and given to another Department. The reduction in the quality and speed of repairs resulted in customer dissatisfaction, and a loss of income within the Sport & Recreation Operations Section.
 - 4.8.5 The removal of the Sport & Recreation Operations Section's budgetary allocation for repairs to equipment resulted in items of equipment, such as vacuum cleaners, treadmills, hairdryers and so on, not being repaired, with customer dissatisfaction and loss of income being the result.
 - 4.8.6 There had been little capital investment in the facilities, until February 2000. The result has been that many of the synthetic pitches are in a very poor condition and are in danger of closure, the plant and machinery operating within are old and inefficient. In general, the facilities are perceived to be tired and unattractive.
- 4.9 In addition, the private sector seized the opportunity to increase their operation within the lucrative health and fitness market. Purpose-built facilities have been constructed and targeted those who could afford regular direct debit deductions. This was at a time when most Local Authority facilities could not compete with the quality of the facilities offered by the private sector. Many commercial enterprises operate such facilities in and around North Lanarkshire.
- 4.10 The review has identified the key issues considered to be important to the stakeholder / customer of the service and the investigations undertaken will report the findings of this work. It is accepted that improvements to the service will be required on an ongoing basis. This report will establish an Improvement Action Plan for the Sport and Recreation service operators. Over a period of time, the Plan will tackle the issues which the stakeholders and customers have identified as 'needing improvement'. A number of the improvements may not require a significant change in the provision of the service, some on the other hand, may.

5. SCOPE OF REVIEW

- 5.1 The Sport Contracts Best Value Service Review was led by the Service Development & Review Manager (Sport). The complexity of the review process required that a Project Team be set up

composed of appropriate Departmental Officers to address various aspects of the review. The members of the Project Team were as follows:

Service Development & Review Manager (Sport)
Sport & Recreation Manager (Operations)
Service Development & Review Officer (Sport)
Area Manager (Operations - Area 1)
Area Manager (Operations - Area 3)
Operations Manager (Time Capsule)
Quality Manager (Policy Development Section)

- 5.2 As stated the review addressed both the Sport and Leisure Management Contracts, and the management of the non-DSO sport and recreation facilities. The aim of the review was to provide an Improvement Action Plan following an examination and investigation of the following key issues:-
- 5.2.1 The Harmonisation of the Sport and Leisure Management specifications. As previously indicated, the work undertaken over the last four years has been substantial. The reorganisation of Local Government in 1996 brought together six Sport and Leisure Management Contracts, five of which are managed by the Sport & Recreation Operations Section, the sixth being managed by The Time Capsule Monklands Trust Limited.
- 5.2.2 The task of therefore bringing the operational procedures of the disparate groups has been a complex task. Issues addressed at an early stage included different conditions of service for staff, different charging levels, and the different methods of managing financial accounts. The harmonisation of this Section's procedures and policies required to be tackled quickly to establish a corporate approach, as well as ensuring the staff were made fully aware of the new organisation of which they were now a part.
- 5.2.3 The assessment of the reliability of the Sport and Recreation in respect of Repairs and Maintenance of the facilities. The responsibility for repairs and maintenance, excluding specialised items of equipment, was transferred to another Department at the outset of reorganisation. It has been the opinion of the Sport and Recreation Operations Section that this has not been an entirely successful approach.
- 5.2.4 The assessment of the Marketing and Promotional Needs of the service in respect of the local community and the wide variety of users. The financial constraint facing the service resulted in significant budget reductions. It is often the case that such reductions target 'soft' budgets such as marketing and advertising. The review will detail a comparison with the private sector and provide an indication of the effect those budget reductions may have had on the income generation within facilities operated by North Lanarkshire Council.
- 5.2.5 The assessment of staff competence in respect of Staff Training Needs and Programmes. The review will identify, again in comparison with other Council Departments, how much is invested in the training needs of our staff. In short, a fully trained and competent staff can help promote success.
- 5.2.6 To identify Customer Expectations and Perceptions of Service Quality in relation to the service provided by staff. The customer is normally adept at providing comment when the service fails. However, there will always be a number of our customers who

unfortunately would prefer to 'vote with their feet'. Such action becomes abundantly clear when usage and income figures show a pattern of decline. The review has grasped the opportunity to consult the customer by using various techniques. This has allowed us to consult our customers to determine customer attitude in regard to our provision of a quality service. The findings will greatly assist the service planning process and enable strategic targeting of service provision, as indicated by the customer.

6. METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 All the techniques to be used are based on the Best Value Strategy developed by the Department of Leisure Services/Community Services.
- 6.2 Best Value in relation to the sport and recreation service is a process of service measurement, development and review based on customer requirements. The approach observes compliance of four essential elements:
- Sound Governance
 - Performance Management and Monitoring
 - Continuous Improvement
 - Long Term Planning and Budgeting
- 6.3 The Sport and Recreation service exists in substantial part to provide amenity for the public and to ensure the service adopts a customer focus. It is therefore necessary that the customer be involved / consulted and services designed and delivered to reflect this. The service must also be transparent to the customer and reliable standards must be set to reflect this. Therefore, the service must enquire and consult the customer to ensure that decisions for service improvement are based upon correct information.
- 6.4 The methodology being undertaken and the justification for conducting this service review will continue to be the pursuit of continuous improvement. The service review will identify appropriate improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of the key service issues identified. Greater customer focus will be pivotal to the improved service and the Sport and Recreation Operators will implement item and issues identified for improvement. The methodologies to be used are as detailed.

6.4.1 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a useful tool for assessing the cost and quality of the Sport and Recreation service in North Lanarkshire, in comparison to other similar Local Authorities and the private sector operators. North Lanarkshire Council is a founder member of the South West Scotland Benchmarking Group (SWSBG), established in 1998.

There are currently nine sport and leisure benchmarking partners from Local Authorities, throughout South West Scotland, who are members of the SWSBG, namely:

North Lanarkshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Inverclyde Council
North Ayrshire Council
East Ayrshire Council
South Ayrshire Council

Dumfries & Galloway Council

However, consideration was given to the differing service provided by each partner, it being agreed that each Local Authority partner would nominate a 'wet and dry' sports facility in order to achieve meaningful comparisons. The facilities chosen by each Authority are as noted:-

North Lanarkshire	- Wishaw SC & Time Capsule
South Lanarkshire	- Blantyre SC, Blantyre
Renfrewshire	- The Lagoon Leisure Centre, Paisley
East Renfrewshire	- Barrhead SC, Barrhead
Inverclyde	- The Waterfront Complex, Greenock
North Ayrshire	- The Magnum Leisure Centre, Irvine
East Ayrshire	- The Galleon Leisure Centre, Kilmarnock
South Ayrshire	- The Citadel, Ayr
Dumfries & Galloway	- The Ryan Centre, Stranraer

North Lanarkshire Council specifically requested that two facilities be nominated, as the information being provided by the Group would enhance the Service Review process.

6.4.2 Process Benchmarking

Considerable effort has been made to establish data benchmarks in an attempt to ensure that like-for-like comparisons are made.

Although the service strives to provide the best service to the customer, there may be occasion when the service falls below the standards the customers have come to expect. Therefore, the ability to quickly respond to a customer's complaint will be a crucial factor in ensuring customer's loyalty is retained. This is very important in today's competitive market place. It is therefore prudent to actively encourage the customer to express their view on the quality of the service provided. Consequently this area is seen to be an important area to benchmark.

Comparisons have been made between the Sport & Recreation Operations Section, the Time Capsule and Esporta, a private sector provider, on their *complaints handling* procedure. This issue was also identified by the SWSBG's benchmarking partners. A comparison for each of the nominated facilities between the partner Authorities will be made in relation to the number and type of complaints received.

A *customer booking system* is often the first point of contact between the customer and the service, given that first impressions do count. Therefore, this is seen to be an important process to benchmark. The current procedures in place for the Sport & Recreation Operations Section, the Time Capsule and the Department's Community Centres Section have been benchmarked to identify areas of best practice.

A further important issue is the ability of the service to function properly in respect to building repairs and ongoing maintenance of the facilities. The capital and revenue finance invested in facilities has been, and continues to be, considerable. In order for the facilities to remain safe, efficient and effective, they should therefore be regularly maintained. A comparison has been made between the Sport & Recreation Operations Section's *repairs and maintenance* process with the Time Capsule's. The procedures identified will be process mapped, i.e. a flow chart will identify the major processes involved and will also identify the timescales for those processes.

The Department of Housing and Property Services have also undertaken a pilot project at the Tryst Sports Centre to compare three possible methods of reporting and implementing *repairs and maintenance* within sport and recreation facilities (excluding specialised items of plant and machinery). It is the intention that the most efficient and effective operating method will be identified and adopted for use within all sport and recreation facilities.

6.4.3 Quality Benchmarking

In contrast to process benchmarking, quality benchmarking identifies quality systems and processes which may be readily adopted for improving the service, where appropriate. The SWSBG are currently comparing management issues as identified within the Quest UK Quality Scheme. The two management issues currently being examined are *Service Planning, Delivery and Control (FOP 1)* and *Cleanliness (FOP 2)*. Both the Tryst Sports Centre and the Time Capsule have been compared with the facilities nominated by the other Local Authority partners. It is anticipated that areas of improvement will be identified, adopted and therefore assist in improving the service currently provided.

6.4.4 Cost Benchmarking

A comparison will be made between the financial budgets for the *marketing and promotion* of the service provided by the Sport & Recreation Operations Section, the Time Capsule and other private sector operators in an attempt to identify potential budget shortfalls.

Staff training is an important issue within the service. The level of staff training can be reflected in staff's competence, confidence and ability to deal with the various issues arising within the service. The average training costs per staff member (FTE) per annum has been benchmarked with various other service operators. This comparison will identify the level of commitment shown towards such training by identifying the available budgets.

As previously indicated within process benchmarking, an element of how some complaints can be resolved, is the number of *complimentary tickets* issued to compensate for loss of service. This item will identify the cost of 'not getting the service right' the first time. Although it is recognised as common practice to issue such tickets as compensation for loss of service, consideration will also be given to the cost of promoting activities through the issue of such complimentary tickets.

6.4.5 Customer Surveys

Customer consultation is the keystone of the best value philosophy and is therefore one of the primary areas being addressed in the Sport and Recreation service review. The main objective of this consultation process is to improve our customer focused service.

The Audit Commission's recent "Can't get No satisfaction?" (1999) publication has advocated that the Servqual survey is one of the best methods of customer consultation since it not only measures customers perception of the service *being* provided, but also compares this with the customers expectations of how the service *should* be provided. The measurement therefore identifies a 'service quality gap' which will require to be addressed to better meet the expressed needs of the customer.

The research will also reveal the relative importance the external customer attaches to each of the five individual dimensions, providing services with an indication of how

well they perform under each dimension. This is a key feature of the Servqual survey instrument.

External customers are asked to rate, on a scale of one to one hundred, how important each of the five dimensions are to them in the provision of a total quality service.

The Servqual survey involved a one-to-one questionnaire being completed by a pre-determined number of *external customers* within all of the Sport & Recreation Operations Section's facilities and the Time Capsule. It is intended to use the same process in the future to measure progress, therefore demonstrating continuous improvement.

The Sport and Recreation Operations Section manage and operate various outdoor facilities. Customers using this service do not normally attend the major facilities on a regular basis, and therefore may not be included in the random sample selected at the facilities. It will therefore be necessary to obtain the views of this group via a *postal external customer* survey, since their contact details are readily available from the Sport & Recreation Operations Section's booking system. A total of 38 postal questionnaires were sent out to this group.

The internal customer's perceptions and expectations of the service are as important as the views of external customers. Sport has proven to be a suitable vehicle for social and educational development, consequently both the Departments of Education and Social Work regularly use the sport and recreation facilities. Therefore *internal customers* (internal to the Council) were consulted on the quality of the service provided to them. This again took the form of a Servqual questionnaire sent out to every school within North Lanarkshire and to Social Work Groups currently utilising the facilities. Again, it is planned to use the same process in the future to measure progress, therefore demonstrating continuous improvement.

6.4.6 Staff Survey

A staff survey has been undertaken to obtain the views of all the Sport & Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule staff in the service being provided. The *staff survey* questionnaires were issued to all members of staff and the results analysed to identify areas for improvement to ensure a plan of continuous improvement can be prepared and implemented.

6.4.7 Customer Focus Groups

It is the intention to establish *customer focus groups* within the major sport and recreation facilities throughout North Lanarkshire. To facilitate this, customers completing the Servqual questionnaire will be asked whether they would be willing to participate were such a group to be set up in appropriate facilities. From those who have identified an interest, a random selection will take place.

The views of the customer focus groups will be used to establish whether there is a common theme for areas requiring improvement. Specific action plans will be prepared and implemented for each individual facility to eradicate any perceived areas of weakness, and to implement positive ideas and suggestions from the groups. Feedback will be provided as to the success, or otherwise, of such ideas and suggestions. This will also show the Customer Focus Groups that there is a commitment from the service operators reinforcing the concept that the views of customers are important.

6.4.8 Staff Focus Groups

The views from *staff focus groups* have been used to establish whether there is a common theme for areas requiring improvement. Specific action plans will be prepared and implemented for each individual facility to eradicate any perceived areas of weakness and to implement positive ideas and suggestions from the groups. Feedback will be obtained as to the success, or otherwise, of their ideas and suggestions. This will also be an indication to the staff that their views can influence the operation of the facility, for the ultimate benefit of the community.

6.4.9 **Quest Informed Customer Mystery Visits**

The South West Scotland Benchmarking Group (SWSBG) is also currently working towards gaining Quest certification for their respective facilities. To aid this process, the Group have established a programme of Inter-Authority *Quest Informed Customer Mystery Visits* to identify areas of best practice for adoption in respective facilities.

To assist the Sport and Recreation service in being more 'customer' driven, the 'visit' will not fully concentrate on systems and procedures, but also samples the actual service delivery as experienced by the facility's customers. Experienced and suitably qualified leisure management professionals will conduct the 'visits' and assess the facilities against the various industry standards currently available. The 'visit' will be unannounced and the 'visitor' unknown to the staff to enable a comparison of actual service delivery to what the facility states that it is providing.

It has been agreed that each Local Authority partner will have four sport and recreation facilities 'visited' by Quest qualified assessors and the results will be made available for comparison purposes.

6.4.10 **European Foundation Quality Model (E.F.Q.M.)**

To ensure continuous improvement of the service, self-assessment using the *EFQM* based assessment tool was carried out in November 2000. This exercise sought to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Sport & Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule. Results established from the assessment focused on middle management's views of the service, in conjunction with the results obtained from the Servqual customer survey, which provides the customers perception of the service.

It is the intention to repeat this process in the future to measure progress and therefore demonstrate continuous improvement within the service. The exercise will be extended to other levels of management within the service to encompass their views, and in turn obtain a wider picture of the management arrangements for the service.

6.4.11 **Quality Function Deployment (Q.F.D.)**

This analysis tool will be used to translate customer requirements into the service planning process. To ensure that the sport and recreation service is based on our customer needs, *QFD* will be used to design the service specification around the results gained from the various techniques used in the service review. For example, techniques such as SERVQUAL, customer complaints, customer focus groups, Quest Informed Mystery Visits, etc. will provide a method for ensuring continuous improvement.

6.4.12 **Quest UK Quality Scheme**

Best value is about constantly striving to improve the quality of service to customers and other stakeholders. One way to improve the quality of the service is to gain

certification of a recognised quality system. Local Authorities have chosen various quality standards such as ISO 9002 (previously known as BS 5750), Chartermark and Investors in People (IIP). Although each scheme has advantages and disadvantages, each scheme is restrictive, given that not specific to the sport and leisure industry.

The four home country sports councils and the leisure industry have recognised this limitation, and as a result set up the Industry Policy Committee (IPC) to establish and implement a quality scheme specific to sport and leisure facilities management. As a consequence, the *Quest UK Quality Scheme* for sport and leisure was launched in September 1996, and has since gained universal approval amongst leisure and recreation professionals. The scheme has also been fully endorsed by the British Quality Foundation.

It is the intention that the Tryst Sports Centre be piloted with a view to gaining Quest for Facilities Management certification. Thereafter, the other sport and recreation facilities throughout North Lanarkshire will also be working towards certification on a phased basis.

The four stages in obtaining certification involve completing a self-assessment quality questionnaire (SAQQ), the submission of the SAQQ to the external Scheme Managers, an informed customer mystery visit, and the internal assessment conducted by fully independent External Assessors.

To obtain certification, it has been necessary to train appropriate members of staff within the facilities as Quest qualified Internal Assessors to enable them to conduct the required internal self assessment exercise. It should be noted that the Quest criteria against which the facility is being appraised represents best practice, and by its nature, will not be readily achieved within a short timescale. It has been identified that the required process for an average sized 'wet and dry' facility can take at least one year to achieve certification. Therefore the lessons learned from the pilot exercise will be applied to the other facilities seeking certification in the future.

7. REVIEW FINDINGS

- 7.1 Significant improvements have been made to the sport and recreation service since 1996. However, consideration should nevertheless be afforded to the significant disruption which took place as a result of reorganisation. It is also clear that the service review process has provided an opportunity to focus on establishing an improved sport and recreation service. Through the techniques previously listed, a methodology has been established which will ensure continuous improvement.

The various techniques used throughout the service review have attempted to address the key issues which were identified as being important to the sport and leisure service being provided by both Operators. The techniques have been used to aid the examination of the key issues and the results of those investigations have been brought together for each specific key issue.

7.2 Key Issue :The Harmonisation Of The Sport & Leisure Management Specifications

It was felt important that following reorganisation staff should quickly be made aware that they now operated within a new organisation. This entailed not only new methods of working, but also required the creation of a new identity.

With this in mind, management ensured that the introduction of new procedures were written on this basis. Management action was therefore based on the creation of new procedures, which were at that time viewed as 'best practice'.

The differences in the Sport & Leisure Management Specifications were significant. It was acknowledged that a certain degree of flexibility in their implementation would be required, not only to ensure best practice, but also best value. This was therefore the basis upon which procedures and practices were harmonised.

As indicated within Appendix 5, extensive harmonisation has taken place within the Sport & Recreation Operations Section. However, this exercise will continue on an ongoing basis to identify areas of 'best practice' for implementation where appropriate and practical. It was also agreed that the Time Capsule would continue to operate as a separate Contract due to its trust status.

7.3 Key Issue : The Reliability Of Repairs And Maintenance Within The Facilities

Various techniques and tools were used to assess this key issue. The Department of Housing and Property Services carried out a pilot study, independent to the service review, within the Tryst Sports Centre in Cumbernauld (a major 'wet and dry' facility). The pilot sought to assess the best means of carrying out repairs and maintenance within the numerous sport and recreation facilities.

Apart from the pilot study, a comparison was made between the Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule. The Time Capsule currently employ a dedicated group of staff trained and qualified to carry out most repairs required within the facility. The Sport and Recreation Operations Section, who also employ a dedicated group of trained and qualified staff, are responsible for carrying out repairs and maintenance to the specialised items of equipment only, within the numerous facilities. The other non-specialised repairs are currently being progressed through the Property Maintenance Section within the Department of Housing and Property Services.

7.3.1 Pilot Study at the Tryst Sports Centre

The pilot study involved assessing three different methods of reporting and implementing repairs. The first method tried involved the existing Sport and Recreation Operations Section carrying out the required repairs, as previously conducted by Motherwell District Council, and Monklands District Council (within the Time Capsule). The second method involved the Sport and Recreation Operations staff reporting the required repairs direct to the Council's Direct Labour Organisation (DLO). The third method, which has been in operation since reorganisation, was the repairs being identified by officers from the Property Maintenance Section within the Department of Housing and Property Services, when visiting the major facilities on a weekly / fortnightly basis to arrange necessary repairs.

The Department of Housing and Property Services are currently preparing the report and will identify the results of this pilot study in due course.

7.3.2 Sport and Recreation Operators

The Process benchmarking approach was used to compare the two methods in an attempt to identify best practice. The Sport & Recreation Operations section have been involved in many discussions over the years, both independently and as part of a Departmental working group, to assist the property Maintenance Section better understand the needs of sports and recreation facilities. The Time Capsule was allowed to continue their method of repairing their building and plant and machinery at reorganisation, however, the Sport & Recreation Operations section were not. It has been established that at least one of the previous authorities Sport & Leisure Management specifications included the repairs element within contract documents.

The current situation has led to the Sport & Recreation Operations section expressing their concerns on property maintenance matters relating to the following issues:

- The prioritisation of what repairs are undertaken, and within what timescale, is the responsibility of the Property Maintenance Section. This leaves the facility management unable to influence this issue in accordance with the needs of the customers.
- The identification of repairs is only carried out by the Property Maintenance Section's staff on a weekly or two weekly basis, which was again considered to be inappropriate for the needs of the sport and recreation customers.
- The Sport & Recreation staff were asked to retain the responsibility for the 'specialist' areas of plant and machinery which led to a degree of confusion between staff members regarding their individual areas of responsibility for some items needing repaired.
- Several health & safety issues remain outstanding, which leads to a degree of discomfort from facility managers who may ultimately have the legal responsibility for such matters.

None of the aforementioned issues relate to the Time Capsule as the facility management has the responsibility and the managerial control for these issues. However, the Property Maintenance Section retain the responsibility for the building fabric.

In this respect the Time Capsule management have expressed their concerns at the timescales which have been involved in such repairs.

Process maps were completed with specific reference to the processes utilised by both the Time Capsule and the Sport & Recreation staff in arranging for the repairs to be carried out, together with the time taken to effect emergency and routine repairs.

The results demonstrate that a significant difference exists between the Property Maintenance Section's procedures, utilised by the Sport & Recreation staff, and the Time Capsule's procedures. For example, the following was identified:

Average time to effect a *routine* repair

- designated by the on-site staff at a sport & recreation facility was **103 days**
- a similar repair took only **56 days** to repair within the Time Capsule

Average time to effect an *emergency* repair

- designated by the on-site staff at a sport & recreation facility was **81 days**
- a similar repair took only **7 days** to repair within the Time Capsule.

However, following recent meetings with the Department of Housing and Property Services, agreement has been reached which should improve this situation significantly. It has been proposed that the on-site Sport & Recreation Operations staff be allowed to report minor repair items to a central point of contact, on a 24 hour, seven days a week, cover basis. This will have the effect of missing out the need to await the visit of a Property Maintenance Officer from the Department of Housing and Property Services.

It is anticipated that the Department of Housing and Property Services will be able to commence such a scheme on 1 April 2001 to a small number of sport and recreation facilities, and thereafter be rolled out to all the others.

Although this concession moves some way towards a more customer-oriented repair service, it is not a return to the total repairs service previously managed by some of the Sport & Leisure Management Operators.

This new scheme will be monitored by both Departments to ensure that any necessary amendments can be actioned quickly. This approach will ensure that the customer is provided with a quick and efficient repair service to better facilitate participation in their chosen sporting and leisure activity.

A full report, which includes the process maps, is available within the Department.

Specific questions within the SERVQUAL survey (conducted in all facilities), addressing the Reliability of Repairs and Maintenance within the Facilities, would indicate that the customers have a perception that they feel safe when using our facilities.

However, customers have also indicated that they are most disappointed that repairs to both the building and equipment are not being carried out promptly. This issue has been identified within the Improvement Action Plan.

7.4 **Key Issue : The Marketing And Promotional Needs Of The Service**

As previously mentioned, this is a budget line that has been subject to reduction over the past four years.

It could be argued that such reductions have had an adverse effect on the income generating ability of the various facilities as a whole.

7.4.1 Complaints Handling Procedures

A process benchmarking comparison between the complaints handling procedures implemented by various sport and leisure operators, the Sport & Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule was carried out. This approach sought to determine possible improvements to, or deficiencies in, our service provision to identify areas of best practice. For purposes of the review, "complaints and comments" will be defined to include the full range of customer feedback, from comments or observations to the lodging of formal complaints.

The other operators chosen for comparison purposes were The Time Capsule (a Council owned company), Glasgow District Council, South Lanarkshire Council (two Local Authorities), Livingwell, Bellshill and Esporta, Hamilton (both private operators).

Overall, the most striking difference is the response time taken between local authority and private industry facilities, ranging from two to ten working days. However, this perhaps is not a fair comparison when taking account of some social and economic complexities facing publicly managed facilities as opposed to private facilities.

Information secured would indicate that the Sport & Recreation Operations Section requires to standardise and review its existing Points of View System. No recording of verbal comments takes place. However, the personal approach in responding to complaints by use of the telephone appears successful from a customer's perspective and would reduce administration.

Other local authorities have committed to display outcomes and provide evidence of implementing service changes and improvements in response to customer feedback. This too will be introduced to Sport and Recreation facilities on customer focus boards.

In conclusion, it is the intention that a review be undertaken of the current Points of View procedures currently in place within the Sports & Recreation facilities with a view to implementing the following –

- Standardisation of points of view system across all the facilities
- Responding to points of view cards or individual letters in person by telephone where possible
- Introduction of a monitoring system for the above to include the monitoring of verbal complaints
- That any amendments to the current Time Capsule and Sports & Recreation systems be reviewed together to ensure a more similar system is adopted.

A report detailing the full findings is available within the Department. The above items will be included within the Improvement Action Plans.

7.4.2 Complaints Received

In addition to the above comparison, the findings obtained to date by the SWSBG in relation to the number and type of complaints received by the 'partner' facilities are as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

	Wishaw SC	Time Capsule	Blantyre SC	Citadel	Magnum
Total No. Complaints	235	360	154	80	91
Total Annual Usage	394,152	508,926	268,823	359,862	678,879
% Complaints Per User	0.06%	0.07%	0.06%	0.02%	0.01%
Cleanliness	7	50	8	32	18
Staff	27	39	23	10	15
Repairs & Maintenance	129	98	42	7	1
Programming	13	32	35	15	48
Pricing	0	51	15	0	6
Other	59	90	31	16	3

Facilities:

Wishaw Sports Centre and Time Capsule, North Lanarkshire Council
Blantyre Sports Centre, South Lanarkshire Council
Citadel, South Ayrshire Council
Magnum, North Ayrshire Council

The initial findings of this group indicated that:-

- Both the Magnum and Citadel facilities did not receive as many complaints as the other facilities.
- Wishaw Sports Centre received the highest number of complaints in relation to Repairs & Maintenance (55%).
- Wishaw Sports Centre has received the lowest number of complaints in relation to Programming and Cleanliness.
- Both Wishaw Sports Centre and the Citadel did not receive any complaints in relation to Pricing.
- The Citadel closed for a lengthy period for a complete refurbishment (investment of £3.3 million), therefore the number of complaints would be anticipated as low for repairs and maintenance.

7.4.3 Customer Booking Systems

Process benchmarking comparisons were made between the Sport & Recreation Operations facilities, the Time Capsule and Community Centres in relation to a customer booking system. The findings revealed that:

- All booking systems offer a seven day advance booking period to customers except Airdrie Leisure Centre which operates an eight day advance booking period
- All procedures offer a cancellation period resulting in no charge to customers
- All procedures pursue payment for late cancellations and unhonoured bookings
- Only the Tryst SC, Time Capsule and the Community Centres have a computerised booking system
- There are no leaflets, posters or booklets explaining the booking procedures available for customers
- Session times vary for synthetic pitches, ranging from 1 hour 30 mins to 1 hour 45 mins

Following the above process benchmarking exercise, the Service Review Project Team arrived at various conclusions. These are detailed within Appendix 6.

As indicated within Appendix 6, there are improvements which can easily be introduced to the service. The Improvement Action Plan will therefore include the following items:

- To consider the introduction of a suitable computerised booking system within the appropriate facilities
- To review the synthetic pitch session times
- To review the eight day booking period at Airdrie Leisure Centre
- To produce suitable and appropriate booking procedure information for customers

7.4.4 Marketing and Promotion Budgets

A cost benchmarking comparison between the financial budgets for marketing and promotion of the service provided by the Time Capsule, the Sport & Recreation Operations Section and various other comparable private sector facilities was undertaken. The financial marketing and promotion budget allocated on an annual basis to the North Lanarkshire Council facilities differ greatly, as do the facilities themselves.

The Time Capsule is recognised as one of the most prestigious leisure and tourist attractions in Scotland and has over 500,000 visitors attending each year. Over the past nine years, the marketing strategy has utilised national coverage through marketing with the Tourist Board, marketing companies and television media. The original marketing and promotion budget of £150,000 was subsequently reduced to £64,000.

It was recently decided that television advertising would no longer be used and that the emphasis on marketing would be to promote the facility on a local basis during the months of October to March. The removal of the television advertising will continue to be monitored on a regular basis by the Time Capsule Marketing staff.

Information on other comparable private sector leisure facilities, sourced by Scot FM (National Media Group) who currently provide a marketing campaign on behalf of the Time Capsule, was obtained. It should be noted however that the figures stated below indicate the amount of annual spend for *television* coverage only:

• Blair Drummond Safari Park	£ 53,063
• Edinburgh Zoo	£ 55,097
• Deep Sea World (St Andrews)	£ 90,884
• M&D's Amusement Park	£236,864

In comparison to the above, the Sport and Recreation Operations Section allocated £34,064 for marketing purposes for the financial year 2000/2001. This budget is required to advertise and market the 18 facilities throughout North Lanarkshire Council.

Competition within the leisure and tourism market has increased so much that the facilities that are managing to 'survive' could be considered to be the 'fittest'. It would also appear that one of the private sector facilities, M&D's Amusement Park, has committed a substantial budget to maximise its potential through a highly publicised public profile.

The Time Capsule will therefore continue to monitor and review its marketing strategy and adopt appropriate changes to its marketing approach in order to ensure that the facility is maintained as a prestigious leisure and tourist facility.

The Sport and Recreation Operations Section will also continue to review its marketing strategy to assess the maximisation of marketing potential for the numerous facilities under its control.

7.4.5 Complimentary Ticket Issue

One element of how some complaints can be measured is the number of complimentary tickets issued to compensate for loss of service. This item will identify the cost of 'not getting the service right' the first time. The purpose of this cost benchmarking investigation is to examine and analyse the cost implications of the current complimentary ticket issue by the Sport and Recreation operations Section and the Time Capsule.

The issue of complimentary tickets is a fairly common practice within the leisure industry. Analysis is required of the numbers and reasons for their issue to examine whether current use provides best value, whilst identifying areas for possible improvement.

As compensatory provision, the tickets are normally issued from the appropriate facility. Only certain members of staff can authorise their issue, such staff being Duty Officer level and above, in both Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule.

However, when used as a promotional tool, they are also issued at the appropriate facility by marketing and promotional staff. When issued, brief details are recorded on the ticket book stubs to identify the reason for issue. This therefore provides some form of control, from an audit perspective, in accounting for their issue.

It is considered important that, from a customer care point of view, the on-the-spot issue of a complimentary ticket following a service failure can prove to be very effective in satisfying the customer complaint, whilst ensuring the customer remains a valued user of that facility. Extensive statistical information has enabled appropriate analysis and interpretation of the ticket issue as a whole.

The information has indicated that the total number of complimentary tickets issued throughout both the Sport & Recreation Operations Section's facilities and the Time Capsule (during the financial year 1999/2000) amounted to 2,236. Given that the total usage figure for these facilities (during the same period) was 2,819,040 and the total income generated was £4,213,532, the number issued is considered to be very low at 0.08% of total usage and 0.05% of total income. Further details are available within Appendix 7.

Given the very low numbers issued for both a service failure and as a promotional tool, further consideration should be given to utilising complementary tickets more than is currently the case, more especially from a promotional perspective.

The expectation of today's sport and recreation facility user is ever increasing, especially within the tourism market segment, which affects the Time Capsule so greatly. The use of such tickets for both service failure and as a promotional tool remains more important than ever. Customers do expect some form of compensatory provision if the service is not provided. Similarly, local schools and community groups have also come to expect some assistance to ensure their continued involvement in the service being provided.

In conclusion, the issuing of tickets both for service failures and promotional tools are well managed and controlled. Obvious differences are evident with the more visitor attraction orientated facilities, such as the Time Capsule and the Aquatec, where tickets are used more for promotional purposes, than other more sport orientated facilities.

The Service Review Project Team would therefore conclude that complimentary ticket issue should continue for both compensatory provision and as a promotional tool, being managed and controlled in their current manner. Further consideration should be given to extending the use of tickets from a promotional perspective to generate new customers and additional revenue. This will therefore be identified within the Improvement Action Plans.

Specific questions within the SERVQUAL survey (conducted in all facilities), addressing the Marketing and Promotional Needs of the Service, would indicate that the customers have a perception that the publicity material is attractively presented.

However, customers have also indicated that they are disappointed that information on the performance of the service is not available. This issue has been specifically identified within the Improvement Action Plans.

7.5 Key Issue : Staff Training Needs And Programmes

Staff training is an important issue for the service. Appropriate and adequate staff training can be reflected in the staff's competence, confidence and ability to deal with the various issues arising within the service.

The review has cost benchmarked the investment in staff training provision and the commitment shown towards providing a comprehensive training programme within the Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule.

7.5.1 Staff Training

The Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule operate different methods of providing training for staff. Although comparison can be made, true costs may not necessarily be able to be identified. However, clear differences and examples of best practice are apparent.

The provision of any successful sport and recreation service is very much dependant on the actions and attitudes of the staff within that service. It is considered vitally important that staff maintain high standards of training with regard to pool lifeguarding duties, first aid requirements and customer care practices, etc.

Many of the requirements are in accordance with Health and Safety Executive legislation or guidance notes. Both the Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule adhere to existing health and safety practices, by ensuring appropriate pool lifeguarding and first aid courses are provided to the staff within the required time frame for revalidation, etc.

The Time Capsule, in it's capacity as an arms length company, employ a Training and Education Officer with the specific remit for liaising with educational establishments with regard to projects, future visits, work experience placements etc. Similarly, a key task of the post holder is to ensure that staff are adequately trained in appropriate aspects of their responsibilities.

In 2000, the Time Capsule was accepted by the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM) as being an approved training centre. This has enabled the Time Capsule to organise appropriate ILAM accredited courses, generating additional revenue by charging other Departments of the Council, in addition to external companies.

The Education and Training Officer prepared a Training Need Analysis for all levels of staff as part of the initial training plan for the facility. The second stage has been to identify appropriate courses and prepare a plan of action for the implementation, both on an internal and external basis.

In contrast, the Sport and Recreation Operations Section rely on the support of the Department's Human Resources Section which contains a training unit. In recent years all APT&C staff were involved in a Training Needs Analysis, with the Training Unit currently providing courses as identified by the staff, and approved by line Managers, to ensure that training needs are adequately met. However due to the specialist nature of the training requirements within the leisure industry, Sport Operations also all pool life guarding courses, all RLSS Trainer/Assessor courses, and specific courses such as emergency breathing appliance training. Sport and Recreation Operations holds its own budget for the purpose of such staff training. This can on occasion be augmented by financial resources made available by the Department for appropriate Departmental-wide courses.

The expenditure allocated to each member of staff for training purposes in a variety of Departments and Sections of the Council is £63.00 per person (based on full time equivalent figures). The figure allocated by the Sport and Recreation Operations Section is £60.04 per person.

For comparison purposes, the Department of Housing and Property Services allocate £100.00 per person. It should be noted that the Department of Housing and Property Services have attained the "Investors In People" award, which may explain this higher figure.

The Department of Community Services as a whole allocate £41.50 per person, despite the fact that training requirements within the leisure industry are greater than other Departments through e.g. pool lifeguarding duties, first aid requirements, etc.

The Time Capsule allocate £20.00 per person. At first glance, this figure could be interpreted that the Time Capsule trains its staff less, however, due to the in-house nature of its training provision it could be argued that the same level of training is being provided the Time Capsule by carrying out more effective provision. It should also be noted that the training expenditure in the Time Capsule does not include the salary and wage allocation for training staff, who also undertake other duties.

In conclusion, the Sport and Recreation Operations Section's allocation of £60.04 seems reasonable when compared with the Council's and the Department of Community Services allocation. However, considering more is spent on each member of staff's uniform, this amount seems relatively low.

Although the above formal costs have been identified, it should also be noted that the Sport and Recreation Operations Section also provide training during shift overlap times through a suitably qualified member of staff, although those costs are not reflected in the figures shown.

Recently the Training Needs Analysis previously completed for the APT&C staff, has been acted upon, with specific development courses arranged. However, this exercise also needs to be addressed with manual staff.

The in-house provision of training courses at the Time Capsule allows increased flexibility in course provision, whilst ensuring the costs are kept to a minimum, as demonstrated by the low cost per person of training. Similarly, this approach encourages staff to seek more qualifications to become recognised 'trainers', thereby leading to increased promotional opportunities.

The ability to organise training courses approved by ILAM has also allowed the Time Capsule to generate additional revenue by attracting external organisations to secure training at competitive rates.

It is clear that although cost comparisons can be made in relation to the training provision offered within any organisation, the quality, frequency and relevance of the training offered is vitally important.

Also, whilst the cost analysis completed does not fully represent which of the training methods provide best value, the comparison has identified areas for improvement.

The Service Review Project Team therefore identified the following items for inclusion in the Improvement Action Plan:

- A Training Needs Analysis be carried out for manual staff.
- A training plan be devised to identify the following:
 - The needs of the staff
 - The courses to be provided
 - The methods of training
 - Timescale
- A training plan be devised for the Time Capsule whilst retaining responsibility for in-house training
- The Time Capsule to review the provision of external training courses

7.5.2 Staff Survey

A staff survey was conducted within all of the facilities to obtain the views of all staff currently employed within the service, by both the Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule. A total of 746 questionnaires were issued to the Sport and Recreation Operations Section staff, and 62 to the Time Capsule staff.

The survey questionnaire allowed the staff to complete their responses anonymously. The questions sought the opinion of the staff on job satisfaction, work relationship with their line Managers, opportunity to suggest improvements and staff training. It also asked the staff to advise if they were praised for work well done, if their line Manager was helpful at resolving work problems, and whether or not suggestions for improvement were implemented. The questionnaire also took the opportunity to ask the staff on the quality level of service provided.

The results of the staff survey for both two groups of staff are as detailed within Appendix 8.

From survey results it would appear that the staff in the Time Capsule believe they could be praised more often when they do a good job, which would hopefully lead to an increase in job satisfaction. Furthermore, neither group of staff were asked for suggestions on how to improve the service.

Despite the training provided for both groups, a relatively high percentage of the staff do not believe they receive adequate training to do their job well, or indeed adequate health and safety training to do their job safely. This may be due to a perception on the staff's part that training is not being made available, where evidence would show that training is provided on a regular and ongoing basis, particularly during the "change over" periods.

The following items have therefore been identified for inclusion in the Improvement Action Plans:-

- Introduce a Staff Suggestion Scheme to encourage staff feedback
- Review Staff Training Plans to ensure appropriate training is being provided

Specific questions within the SERVQUAL survey (conducted in all facilities), addressing the Staff Training Needs and Programmes, would indicate that the customers have a perception that they are confident in our staff's proper behaviour. Both groups of staff should therefore be encouraged by the fact that their customers have confidence in them.

Equally, customers also consider that both groups of staff do not appear to show a willingness to accommodate requests for change to the service. This issue has been identified within the Improvement Action Plan.

7.6 Key Issue : Customer Expectations And Perceptions Of The Service

The review has conducted what is understood to be the largest Servqual survey conducted in Scotland. Servqual is an analysis tool which has been used to identify not only the customers views on the service being provided, but also has consulted the customers on what level of service they believe they should receive.

7.6.1 The External Customer

The external customer Servqual gap-analysis survey took the form of a one-to-one questionnaire which was completed by 1,220 external customers within the Sport & Recreation Operations Section's facilities and the Time Capsule.

The survey was conducted throughout the months of June and July 2000 within each of the facilities in North Lanarkshire. It was recognised that a customer's opinion based on the quality of service provided would differ at different times of the day, as well as different times of the week. It was with this in mind that the survey was conducted during four main timeslots. These timeslots were morning, afternoon, evening and weekend. The number of questionnaires to be completed was based on random sampling and took account of the number of customers using our facilities at that particular time. Table 2 below indicates the number of questionnaires completed at each facility and when they were conducted.

Table 2.

FACILITY	MORN	A/NOON	EVEN	WK/ND	TOTAL	%
Tryst SC	15	23	76	38	152	12.5
Kilsyth Pool	4	7	22	11	44	3.6
Palacerigg Golf	3	5	2	10	20	1.6
Iain Nicolson C	2	4	12	6	24	2.0
Airdrie LC	9	14	47	24	94	7.7
John Smith Pool	6	9	29	15	59	4.8
Columba SC	0	0	15	7	22	1.8
Coatbridge OSC	1	2	7	3	13	1.1
Coatbridge Golf/DR	4	6	8	12	30	2.4
Kirkwood SB	1	1	5	2	9	0.7
Aquatec	10	14	24	48	96	7.9
Sir Matt Busby	9	14	46	23	92	7.5
Keir Hardie C	2	3	11	5	21	1.7
Birkenshaw SH	1	1	4	2	8	0.7
Wishaw SC	18	27	90	45	180	14.8
Shotts LC	5	7	24	12	48	3.9
Time Capsule	31	46	77	154	308	25.3
TOTAL	121	183	499	417	1,220	100%

The Servqual gap-analysis survey has indicated that the total number of respondents was 1,165 which is a response rate of 95.5%. Therefore, the number of questionnaires completed incorrectly amounted to 55 (4.5%).

Customers using the Sport and Recreation Operations Section's various outdoor facilities were unlikely to have been included in the random sample selected at the other facilities shown within Table 2. Therefore, the views of this group were requested via a *postal external customer* survey, with a total of 38 postal questionnaires being sent out to those customers.

Examples of the characteristics used by Servqual are:

- Tangibles - appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.
- Reliability - ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- Responsiveness - willingness to help customers and provide a prompt service
- Assurance - knowledge and courtesy of employees and the customers ability to trust the employees with confidence
- Empathy - caring, individualised attention the service provides to its customers.

The sport *Servqual* results are directly comparable with the initial exploratory research results obtained by Zeithaml et al (1990), which concluded that customers expect most from the reliability dimension. This is also apparent in surveys conducted by other academic researchers (Donnelly, Wizniewski 1995; Donnelly, Dalrymple 1996; Shui, Donnelly 1999; Curry, Brysland 1999).

Consequently, all of the questionnaire responses were negative and an overall weighted *Servqual* score of **-0.73** was recorded, indicating unsurprisingly that a shortfall in meeting customer expectations across all service areas and dimensions.

Although further details can be identified within Appendix 9, the following results for the external customers have been summarised as below.

- They were **most satisfied** with "the knowledge and courtesy of employees and the customers ability to trust the employees with confidence". They were especially most satisfied with the staff's proper behaviour.
- They were **most disappointed** with "it's ability to provide the service it said it would" and "it's willingness to help customers and provide a prompt service". They were especially most disappointed with the building and equipment repairs issue and the heating and ventilation issue.

These items, and those identified within Appendix 9, have been included within the Improvement Action Plans.

7.6.2 The Internal Customer

The internal customers, the Departments of Education and Social Work, were consulted on the quality of the service provided when attending the sport and recreation facilities. This Servqual gap-analysis questionnaire was sent out to 197 schools within North Lanarkshire and 24 groups associated with the Social Work Department.

A total of 64 completed responses were received. The response rate was therefore 29.0%.

As can be identified within Appendix 10, all of the questionnaire responses were negative with a weighted *Servqual* score of **-0.19** being recorded. Again this indicated a shortfall in meeting customer expectations across all service areas and dimensions.

Although further details can be identified within Appendix 10, the following results for the internal customers have been summarised as below.

- They were **most satisfied** with "the knowledge and courtesy of employees and the customers ability to trust the employees with confidence". They were especially most satisfied with the staff's courtesy towards the customer.
- They were **most disappointed** with "it's ability to provide the service it said it would" and "it's willingness to help customers and provide a prompt service". They were especially most disappointed with the heating and ventilation issue and the advance notice given when reducing the service.

It is interesting to note that both the external and internal customers would appear to be most satisfied and most disappointed with the same issues. The above items have been identified within the Improvement Action Plans.

7.6.3 Customer Focus Groups

The extensive SERVQUAL survey, conducted throughout the facilities, specifically asked the external customers whether they would be interested in participating in a Customer Focus Group. The completed questionnaires identified that there are potentially 822 users expressing an interest (70.5% of respondents).

The principle involved is that a small group of regular customers is formed, representing a variety of users affected by the service provided. Such groups then provide the operators of the service on feedback on how the service is currently performing. Similarly, it enables suggestions or ideas to be generated from the users, to be further examined and developed, whilst ultimately providing a vital link between the users and the operators; thereby ensuring the needs of the customers are being met.

Experience has shown that customers have varying views on all manners of service provision, and it is therefore important to ensure that the formation of such groups is tackled in a structured and formal manner to ensure their ultimate effectiveness. Care must be taken to ensure that minority interests are not ignored, whilst at the same time ensuring that minority interests are not being unfairly represented.

The selection of Customer Focus Groups will be made from the customer survey respondents and selected to ensure that the profile of the group is as representative as possible in relation to a broad range of customers. The Customer focus groups established should meet on a quarterly basis. Their formation could be helpful, especially within the larger facilities operated by the Section, to ensure our customer needs are continually reassessed, thereby involving the community in the decision making processes.

The management and control of the Focus Groups must be carried out in an open and transparent manner, requiring proper control measures to ensure their effectiveness.

The formation of such groups should be afforded appropriate publicity to ensure that customers within each facility are made fully aware of the Groups proposals, which will ultimately ensure that customer needs and views are being represented.

It is therefore the intention that Customer Focus Groups be formed within the Time Capsule, Wishaw Sports Centre, Tryst Sports Centre, Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex and Airdrie Leisure Centre. Arrangements will be made to meet on a quarterly basis in accordance with appropriate guidelines and procedures.

This issue will be included within the Improvement Action Plan.

7.6.4 Staff Focus Groups

The introduction of Staff Focus Groups, both located within the Sport & Recreation Operations facilities and the Time Capsule, have been considered as part of the service review.

Staff focus groups will identify areas requiring improvement to the service being provided. Specific action plans will be prepared and implemented for each facility.

Both the Sport & Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule could be considered major employers with large numbers of staff located in various facilities throughout North Lanarkshire. It should be noted however that regular operational meetings are held with staff at all levels on an ongoing basis. However, the establishment of specific Focus Groups to address relevant issues and items identified by staff for service improvement is a wholly different approach from the regular operational meetings which would deal with the day to day matters.

Internal communication with the staff will therefore be vital to the effective operation of the facilities given that staff working at the 'coal face' can contribute practical solutions to many operational problems.

Regular meetings are held in the Time Capsule to address issues such as Health and Safety, Staff Training and Recruitment/Work Policy Review. One such group due to be established in the near future will address Housekeeping issues.

Similar to the above, regular meetings are also held by the Sport & Recreation Operations Section to address various issues. However, two staff groups have recently been established within the larger facilities to specifically address working arrangements for Events, to ensure that corporate team working is implemented.

It is the intention, following the success of the two groups, that their remit will be expanded further to ensure that the numerous issues will be addressed on a more regular frequency.

The implementation of such Staff Focus Groups will continue to be reviewed and will be identified within the Improvement Action Plan.

7.6.5 Quest Informed Customer Mystery Visits

The South West Scotland Benchmarking Group (SWSBG) have established a programme of additional Inter-Authority Quest Informed Customer Mystery Visits to identify areas of best practice.

One of the fundamental elements of Quest scheme involves an unannounced visit to the facility being audited by an Informed Customer Mystery Visitor. The purpose of the visitor is to establish whether the level of service reported by that facility in their Self Assessment Quality Questionnaire reflects the level of service experienced by the customer.

To assist each member authority with the Quest accreditation process, the SWSBG agreed to establish a series of inter-authority mystery visits utilising its pool of trained Quest Internal Assessors. Each authority named 4 facilities for audit and North Lanarkshire put forward Tryst Sports Centre in Cumbernauld, Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex in Bellshill, Wishaw Sports Centre in Wishaw and the Time Capsule in Coatbridge.

One of the perceived benefits of the inter-authority programme of visits was that this approach can assist with the cross fertilisation of ideas and good working practices between the authorities. In addition, since the reports follow a consistent format using Quest criteria, it is conceivably possible to benchmark North Lanarkshire's performance in Management issues, which can then be assessed against neighbouring Council's performance in specific areas.

To date, Tryst Sports Centre, Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex and Wishaw Sports Centre have been mystery shopped by Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and South Lanarkshire Council's respectively. In each case, the mystery visitors were unknown by the staff at the facility being audited.

The full detailed reports are available within the Department for the audits conducted at Tryst Sports Centre, the Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex and Wishaw Sports Centre. The items identified within the audits are detailed within Appendix 11, 12 and 13 respectively.

Each facility will prepare a Facility Action Plan following such visits to address the issues at a local level, whilst ensuring that a corporate approach is applied. The Improvement Action Plans will include reference to the implementation of the Facility Plans.

7.6.6 European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM)

To assist in complying with the continuous improvement element of best value, the Department of Community Services is using the EFQM Excellence Model as a framework for continuous improvement.

The EFQM Excellence model is a powerful and comprehensive assessment tool suitable for use in both the public and private sector to identify strengths, areas for improvement and to deliver tangible performance improvements.

The Self Assessment exercise was carried out with both the Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule. A significant part of the sport and recreation service consists of a Sport and Leisure Management Direct Service Organisation (DSO), however, the management of facilities exempt from CCT legislation are also the responsibility of the Sport & Recreation Operations Section.

The Department used the 1999 revised model, which gives increased importance to issues such as partnership knowledge and management, and is now fully applicable to the public sector and a regime of best value. The following staff took part in the Sport & Recreation Operations Section Self Assessment exercise:

- Service Development and Review Officer (Sport)
- Quality Manager
- Sport Operations Area Manager (Area 1)
- Sport Operations Area Manager (Area 2)
- Sport Operations Area Manager (Areas 3 & 4)

The Time Capsule's Self Assessment exercise team were:

- Operations Manager
- Duty Manager
- 3 Duty Officers

In both cases the Self-Assessment exercise took the form of a Facilitator Led Workshop Approach, led by the Service Development and Review Manager (Sport) and the Quality Manager, who are both EFQM Trained Facilitators and Assessors.

The process involved training the self assessment participants in the EFQM Excellence Model principles, which consisted of two separate full days introductory course, one for the Time Capsule staff and the other for Sport & Recreation Operations Section staff.

Customised self-completion EFQM workbooks were distributed to both teams and a timescale of two weeks was allocated for the successful completion of the workbooks. The process took two full days, and resulted in the production of a list of SMART actions for both the Time Capsule and Sport & Recreation Operations Section.

The self assessment methodology used was a mix of two very different approaches, the Award style approach and the Facilitator Led Workshop approach. The Award approach was used primarily for its evidential nature and to prepare Departmental services for the award in forthcoming years. It also provided an audit trail for external governing bodies ease of reference.

The formal EFQM criteria, definitions and prompts, were also used along with a customised evidential section, along with an action planning table designed to encompass the SMART criteria. Both Self Assessments were scored using the RADAR approach.

In conclusion, the self-assessment exercise was very successful, with a list of strengths and areas for improvement having been identified. Both Operators require to evaluate their staff's responses and implement appropriate improvements. This requirement has been included in the Improvement Action plans

Furthermore, the output of the self-assessment including scores, strengths and areas for improvement will be fed into the Public Sector Benchmarking Project database to allow performance comparisons with both private and public sector organisations.

7.6.7 Quality Function Deployment (QFD)

This analysis tool was used to translate customer requirements into broad specification improvement actions which will aid the service planning process. To ensure that the sport and recreation service is based on our customer needs, QFD was used to design the customer requirements around the results gained from the various techniques used in the service review.

The finalised results obtained from the SERVQUAL gap-analysis surveys, customer complaints, customer focus groups and Quest Informed Mystery Visits have been used to identify the issues, ranked in order of importance, by both the external and internal customers.

The 'House of Quality' was prepared for the five dimensions of service quality as previously referred to in Servqual (Section 4.5) and is included in Appendix 14.

The QFD model has been prepared identifying the customer's expectations in order of importance, whilst the issues which will require to be reviewed, have also been set out. The next stage will be for the operators to agree the correlation between the various factors. This will then clarify which specific areas require to be addressed in priority order, to ensure that the customer's needs are those which are being addressed first. The 'House of Quality' correlation exercise will be included within the Improvement Action Plans.

7.6.8 Quest UK Quality Scheme

The first stage required in attempting to seek the Quest UK Quality Scheme certification is to ensure that the staff are suitably qualified to enable the self-assessment element of the scheme to be conducted in an appropriate manner.

A total of 28 members of staff, 27 from sport and recreation and the Departmental Quality Manager, successfully completed a Quest Internal Assessors training course held in August 2000. The first facility to seek certification will be the Tryst Sports Centre and a Working Group has been set up for the facility, comprising of suitably qualified staff. This group have implemented measures to obtain the required information which will lead towards self-assessment. The group are working on the completion of the self assessment questionnaire. This work will provide the necessary information required for an improvement plan and will also give some indication of where the Tryst Sports Centre, as a facility, would be placed in relation to the Quest criteria.

The group have also been working on comparing the detail of the criteria, contained in the Managers Guidance Pack, with the current operation of the Centre to determine which areas to concentrate on in relation to formulating an improvement plan. Initial indications were that the Centre compared well in some areas where there was more direct control, and less well when other Departments and/or Sections were involved.

Training was recognised as an essential element following the Internal Assessors course, to enable all of the staff involved in the process to fully understand the part they had to play in it. A further training course was arranged on 31 January 2001 at Broadwood Stadium, an "Introduction to Quest Workshop", to cater for a cross section of Tryst staff and a large number of other staff from across the Division (approximately 40 staff). In-house training will also take place within the Tryst Sports Centre, conducted by the Duty Officers who are Internal Assessor trained, to ensure a widespread knowledge amongst the staff exists generally.

It has become apparent that there is a significant volume of work required even to pass the initial stages, and sufficient time is required. Staff may have to divide their duties in order to achieve this, however, the benefits of going through the Quest process beginning to be fully appreciated and will no doubt have a positive effect on the Tryst Sports Centre and its staff in due course.

It is anticipated that the self-assessment stage will be completed mid 2001 following which the External Assessors will be asked to evaluate the Working Group's deliberations. Thereafter, it is intended to seek certification for other facilities on a phased programme basis. The staff will learn valuable lessons from the Tryst Sports Centre's progress, and it is therefore anticipated that the lengthy process required in seeking certification within the other facilities could be implemented on a shorter timescale.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The need to get it right first time, and every time, requires an effective Quality Scheme recognised and endorsed by appropriate groups. This would indicate to our customers that the service provider has a commitment to achieving a standard of service acceptable to all.
- 8.2 The customer needs to be heard and their views implemented where possible to achieve customer driven service which both the service providers and customers are proud. It is not anticipated that the quality gap will necessarily 'vanish' but that customers opinions and expectations may change over time. A flexible approach to service delivery must be maintained.
- 8.3 The initial findings to date would appear to indicate that many of the facilities are perceived to be 'tired and unattractive' due to the lack of investment. The service providers are seeking to compete with the private sector operators who invest in their facilities. The Department recognises that the generation of income has been adversely affected as a result, and has subsequently allocated financial resources to begin to address the previous lack of investment.
- 8.4 With reference to the five key issues identified in section 4, of the report, 'Scope of Review', the following can be concluded from the review process:-

8.4.1 Harmonisation of Contracts

Many items were harmonised at the early stages of reorganisation which proved successful in bringing a corporate identity to Sport & Recreation.

Other authorities tackled this issue in stages, which led to a slow transfer to corporate methods of operation, resulting in continued differences in matters such as charges.

The task of harmonising issues ensured that every operational practice was questioned, which resulted in the 'best' and most appropriate procedure being utilised. Although there remain areas where different procedures continue to operate, it is no longer felt necessary to amend them simply as part of a harmonisation exercise. If differences exist which do not impinge upon the corporate operation of the Section and more importantly, if they satisfy the customers' needs, then it may be perfectly reasonable to retain such differences. Nonetheless, work is still required to review all existing procedures to ensure that wherever possible appropriate practices should continue to be harmonised.

The Time Capsule's methods of operation remain different from that of the Sport & Recreation section due to its Trust status. Methods of their operation and indeed terms and conditions for employees will continue to be different. However, it is intended that more corporate working with the Trust will be developed.

8.4.2 Repairs and Maintenance

The concerns of the Sport & Recreation section staff, in relation to repairs to the facilities are shared by our customers. The Customers Survey clearly identified repairs as being their major concern. This issue was also highlighted when a comparison was made between the existing system provided by Housing & Property to the Sport & Recreation facilities, as opposed to the system utilised by the in-house staff within the Time Capsule.

During the review process a pilot study was carried out within one of the Sports & Recreation facilities which has led to proposed changes to the Department of Housing & Property's repairs procedures. This should result in a more responsive service being implemented over the next few months. The Sport & Recreation section will continue to monitor this issue to ensure that repairs procedures satisfy the customers' needs.

8.4.3 Marketing & Promotional Needs

The review process clearly identified the major shortfall in funding for marketing and promotional activities within the Sport & Recreation section specifically, but also to the Time Capsule, in comparison with the commercial sector in the leisure and tourism industries.

The identification of specific marketing and promotional posts within both the Sport & Recreation section and the Time Capsule's establishment has assisted in ensuring that very limited resources are used effectively.

Customers in all our facilities are fairly satisfied with the quality of promotional literature and marketing activity, whilst steps are currently being taken to fully embrace the new Department of Community Services corporate identity. Marketing strategies have been developed and specific action plans prepared to ensure a planned approach to this key issue over the forthcoming year. It will be important to continually amend in accordance with customer needs, the limited financial resources and the expertise available, to ensure that resources continue to maximise future usage and income.

The Time Capsule's marketing strategy has been amended significantly during the review process, with the decision being taken to concentrate more on the local market with no television advertising activity taking place.

The results of such a strategy will be fully determined at the financial year end when direct comparisons can be made against the performance of the facility the previous year.

The issue of charges however remains an issue from a commercial perspective, as both the Sport & Recreation section and the Time Capsule are both controlled in this matter by the local authority. However, significant progress has been made through the introduction of specific course charges, ad-hoc event charges and special promotional initiatives. Considerable effort has been made in forging links with local Social Inclusion Partnership areas to ensure that the charging of an activity does not prohibit disadvantaged groups from participating, whilst allowing financial targets to be met by the facilities. Such links will continue to be developed in the future.

8.4.4 Staff Training Needs and Programmes

Despite both operators identifying that training was a vital element to their provision, it would appear that more work is required to be taken in this area, specifically in matters concerning customer care aspects. The financial resources currently identified for the training of staff may well not be sufficient to improve this area. Similarly, consideration should be given to the identification of the needs of the staff by the continuation of the training needs analysis of APT & C staff within the Department of Community Services.

Many commercial organisations set aside specific times for staff training sessions which requires the facility or service to be closed for a set period each week. Such action reinforces the importance organisations place on the need for appropriate staff training.

The current long opening hours of many of the Sports & Recreation facilities may therefore be reviewed in an attempt to identify the most suitable training periods within their existing operation. The performance of the staff was clearly acknowledged to be an important part of the service delivery process by the customers.

8.4.5 Customer Expectations and Perceptions

The extensive customer survey exercise proved most valuable in identifying customer's expectations. The gaps identified have enabled the operators to prepare implementation action plan to address the customers' needs in order of priority.

It is the intention of the operators to publish the results of this survey within the facilities, to reassure the customers that their concerns and expectations are being taken seriously. Future customer surveys can also be measured against this benchmark result, the operator's target being continuous improvement.

Results will also be utilised as a method of performance monitoring of facilities, and staff alike and can assist in the identification of weak areas of operation when further detailed analysis is undertaken.

Plans have been made for each of the larger facilities to form customer forums, which will enable the operators to continually examine their performance through direct contact with customers.

It is acknowledged that constant investment in facilities is expected by customers' of today's leisure environment. This issue has clearly been identified as an area to be improved upon by the operators.

The review addresses many issues which the operators can manage and control, however, many of the customers' concerns may relate to other Department's performances. The operators will therefore continue to press other agencies to understand that the needs of the customers are the priority of the service providers.

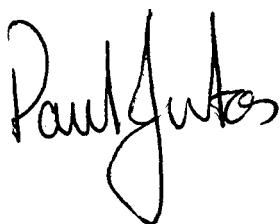
- 8.5 Ongoing work in relation to the issues identified for the service review will continue and it should also be noted that the "Getting To Know You" framework developed by Audit Scotland (May 1999) will be used as a method of public performance reporting. This will provide a clear indication of service performance to the relevant stakeholder groups.
- 8.6 Following receipt of the relevant performance information and the results of the customer expectations, consensus is that an Option Appraisal exercise would not require to be conducted at this stage, due to the following:-
- The review results would indicate that both the Sport & Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule are performing successfully as shown within the benchmarking and customer data.
 - Improvements are planned for the service as a result of the review
 - The above improvements identified for action can be financed internally
 - The 'Value For Money' statement in the SERVQUAL analysis produced a low gap score of -0.92 which shows that the customers are generally satisfied with the service being provided.
- 8.7 Equally, the diversity of approach to leisure service provision within North Lanarkshire is reflected in the various forms of management systems currently in place. A quality leisure product is provided through a comprehensive DSO Operation, Trust (the Time Capsule), and a separate Company (Broadwood Stadium).

9. IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS

- 9.1 The Best Value Service Review for Sport Contracts has identified a number of items and issues to be addressed. The 'Improvement Action Plan' has been prepared with both the Sport and Recreation Operations Section and the Time Capsule in mind. However, given that the management of the respective operations are separate, it has been necessary to indicate which items of improvement will apply to which entity.
- 9.2 The Sport and Recreation Operations Section's Improvement Action Plan is attached as Appendix 3.
- 9.3 The Time Capsule's Improvement Action Plan is attached as Appendix 4.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 That the Committee notes the contents of this report and approves the implementation of the Best Value Service Review Action Plans (Appendices 3 and 4).



SPORT – SERVICE REVIEW APPENDICES & TITLES

Appendix 1	Scope of Project
Appendix 2	Best Value Service Review – Sports Contracts Project Plan
Appendix 3	Best Value Service Review - Sports Operations - Action Plan
Appendix 4	Best Value Service Review –Time capsule - Action Plan
Appendix 5	Procedures and Practices Harmonised
Appendix 6	Customer Booking Systems
Appendix 7	Complimentary Ticket Issue
Appendix 8	Sport & Recreation Staff Surveys
Appendix 9	SERVQUAL Results – External Customers
Appendix 10	SERVQUAL Results – Internal Customer
Appendix 11	QUEST Informed Mystery Visit - Tryst Sports Centre
Appendix 12	QUEST Informed Mystery Visit - Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex
Appendix 13	QUEST Informed Mystery Visit - Wishaw Sports Centre
Appendix 14	Sports Operations - Quality Function Deployment Matrix
Appendix 15	Sport Contracts Service Review – European Foundation Quality Management Excellence Model - December 2000
Appendix 16	Sport & Recreation (Operations) EFQM Self Assessment - November 2000
Appendix 17	Time Capsule EFQM Self Assessment – November 2000
Appendix 18	Sport & Recreation (Operations) E.F.Q.M. Self Assessment - November 2000
Appendix 19	TIME CAPSULE EFQM Self Assessment Action Plan - November 2000

SPORT & RECREATION OPERATIONS SECTION - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

1. Description of the planned improvement.	2. Why has this improvement been chosen and which PMP criteria does it relate to?	3. What is this improvement intended to achieve? this should be both specific and measurable.	4. What are the key project milestones for this improvement? these should detail both relevant actions and timescales.	5. How will you know whether the improvement has achieved what it was meant to?	6. In which of your plans (e.g. Service Plan) is this improvement detailed?
1. Implement revised repairs scheme in conjunction with Housing & Property Services Dept.	PMP 6 but also 8 & 9.	Reduce time taken to effect minor repairs by 50% by March 2002.	PMS to implement revised procedures for some facilities on 1 April and to rollout to all others within 3 months.	Comparison with process maps undertaken in service review.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
2. Review current Points of View / Customer Comments procedures and consider personal responses and monitoring and recording of verbal complaints.	PMP 2 but also 8 & 9.	Quicker and more personal response to customer comments leading to greater customer satisfaction.	Establish new points of view cards by July. Prepare new procedures by August. Implement new procedures by September.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
3. Consider introduction of computerised booking system within appropriate facilities.	PMP 7 & 9 but also 2 & 8.	Improve the ease of booking facilities to customers. Increase mgt info on customers to aid mgt decisions and improve effectiveness of promotional campaigns.	Introduce point of sale mgt info system to south facilities by March. Pilot scheme within Airdrie LC of proposed booking system by April. Rollout of new point of sale system within north facilities by March 2002. Rollout computerised booking system to all facilities by March 2003.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups. Improved returns on promotional campaigns.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.

SPORT & RECREATION OPERATIONS SECTION - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

4. Review booking procedures and specifically consider synthetic pitch session times and standardisation of all facilities booking procedures.	PMP 2 but also 6 & 8.	Improve the ease of booking facilities to customers.	Establish current practices and consider standardisation of all by December 2001.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002
5. Produce booking procedure information for customers.	PMP 2 but also 8.	Improve the ease of booking facilities to customers.	Following standardisation by December 2001, prepare info leaflets etc by March 2002.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
6. Monitor and review marketing strategy each year to continually improve.	PMP 4 but also 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.	To ensure specific market segments are more effectively targetted by increasing returns on promotional campaigns by 10%.	Each campaign to be assessed for returns wherever possible from 1 April.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups. Analysis of participation in activities promoted.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
7. Display service performance information for customers at all facilities.	PMP 10 but also 2, 8 & 9.	To ensure openness and transparency of the service provided by allowing customers access to performance statistics.	Statutory performance indicators and other relevant performance info to be displayed regularly on customer focus boards from July 2001.	Feedback from customer focus groups and points of view cards.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.

SPORT & RECREATION OPERATIONS SECTION - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

8. Conduct Training Needs Analysis for manual staff.	PMP 5.	Determine the training needs of all manual staff by March 2002.	Establish methodology for this task with Dept training officers by Aug 2001 and carry out Needs Analysis to be completed by March 2002.	Staff feedback. assessment by Quest criteria.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
9. Devise a Training Plan for all staff and ensure regular review of such.	PMP 5.	To prepare a planned programme of training in priority order of all manual staff by Aug 2003.	To implement a planned programme of training in priority order of all manual staff by March 2003.	Staff feedback. Assessment by Quest criteria.	To be detailed in Business Plans 2001-2002 & 2002-2003.
10. Introduce Staff Suggestion scheme at all facilities.	PMP 5.	To ensure staff have the opportunity to directly improve the service provided and improve their job satisfaction.	Suggestions scheme to be prepared by December 2001 and implemented by March 2002.	Staff feedback. Assessment by Quest criteria.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
11. As per results from Customer Servqual, review appropriate procedures for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'ability to provide service' 'willingness to help customers and provide a prompt service' 	PMP 2.	Improve levels of customer satisfaction.	Review all customer care procedures for all levels of staff by March 2002 and implement by July 2002.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.

SPORT & RECREATION OPERATIONS SECTION - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

<p>12. Introduce Customer Focus Groups at the following facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wishaw SC • Tryst SC • Sir Matt Busby SC • Airdrie LC 	PMP 2.	To ensure effective feedback from customers to allow mgt to take improvement actions.	Focus group guidelines and procedures to be identified by July 2001. Interested customers to be identified and to have held first meeting by December 2001.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
<p>13. Consider implementation of Staff Focus Groups.</p>	PMP 5.	To ensure effective feedback from staff to allow mgt to take improvement actions.	Focus group guidelines and procedures to be identified by July 2001. Interested staff to be identified and to have held first meeting by December 2001.	Assessment of customer and staff satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from staff focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
<p>14. Prepare and implement Facility Action Plans following Quest Mystery Visits.</p>	PMP 8 but also 2, 5, 6 & 9.	To ensure effective feedback from customers to allow mgt to take improvement actions.	Facility Action plans to be produced within one month of receipt of Visit Report.	Assessment of customer and staff satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer and staff focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
<p>15. A list of Strengths and Area For Improvement have been derived from the EFQM Self Assessment and is contained within Appendix 16 and the</p>	PMP 2 but also 5, 6, 7 & 9.	Improve levels of customer and staff satisfaction.	As indicated in Appendix 18.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from Customer and Staff Focus Groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.

SPORT & RECREATION OPERATIONS SECTION - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Actions are contained in Appendix 18.					
16. Evaluate responses from QFD exercise and implement improvements where possible.	PMP 2 but also 5, 6, 7 & 9.	Improve levels of customer and staff satisfaction.	To complete evaluation by March 2001. Implement improvements, where possible, by March 2002.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from Customer and Staff Focus Groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
17. Seek certification for Quest UK Quality Scheme at Tryst SC and prepare to roll-out to other large facilities.	PMP 8 but also 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 10.	To implement a quality scheme which ultimately leads to an improved service for the customers and increased job satisfaction for the staff.	Tryst SC to be formally assessed by Sept 2001. One other facility to prepare and be assessed by March 2002. Two other facilities to prepare and be assessed by March 2003.	Quest registration to be sought. Assessment of customer and staff satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer and staff focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.

TIME CAPSULE - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

1. Description of the planned improvement.	2. Why has this improvement been chosen and which PMP criteria does it relate to?	3. What is this improvement intended to achieve? this should be both specific and measurable.	4. What are the key project milestones for this improvement? these should detail both relevant actions and timescales.	5. How will you know whether the improvement has achieved what it was meant to?	6. In which of your plans (e.g. Service Plan) is this improvement detailed?
1. Review current Points of View / Customer Comments procedures and consider personal responses and monitoring and recording of verbal complaints.	PMP 2 but also 8 & 9.	Quicker and more personal response to customer comments leading to greater customer satisfaction.	Establish new points of view cards by July. Prepare new procedures by August. Implement new procedures by September.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
2. Consider introduction of computerised booking system.	PMP 7 & 9 but also 2 & 8.	Improve the ease of booking facilities to customers. Increase mgt info on customers to aid mgt decisions and improve effectiveness of promotional campaigns.	Introduce point of sale mgt info system by March 2002.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups. Improved returns on promotional campaigns.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
3. Produce booking procedure information for customers.	PMP 2 but also 8.	Improve the ease of booking facilities to customers.	Prepare info leaflets etc by March 2002.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
4. Monitor and review marketing strategy	PMP 4 but also 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.	To ensure specific market segments are more	Each campaign to be assessed for returns	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-

TIME CAPSULE - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

each year to continually improve.		effectively targetted by increasing returns on promotional campaigns by 10%.	wherever possible from 1 April.	Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups. Analysis of participation in activities promoted.	2002.
5. Display service performance information for customers.	PMP 10 but also 2, 8 & 9.	To ensure openness and transparency of the service provided by allowing customers access to performance statistics.	Statutory performance indicators and other relevant performance info to be displayed regularly on customer focus boards from July 2001.	Feedback from customer focus groups and points of view / comments cards.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
6. Devise a Training Plan for all staff and ensure regular review of such.	PMP 5.	To prepare a planned programme of training in priority order of all staff by Aug 2003.	To implement a planned programme of training in priority order of all staff by March 2003.	Staff feedback. Assessment by Quest criteria.	To be detailed in Business Plans 2001-2002 & 2002-2003.
7. Introduce Staff Suggestion scheme.	PMP 5.	To ensure staff have the opportunity to directly improve the service provided and improve their job satisfaction.	Suggestions scheme to be prepared by December 2001 and implemented by March 2002.	Staff feedback. Assessment by Quest criteria.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
8. As per results from Customer Servqual, review appropriate procedures for:	PMP 8.	Improve levels of customer satisfaction.	Review all customer care procedures for all levels of staff by March 2002 and implement by July 2002.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.

TIME CAPSULE - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'ability to provide service' • 'willingness to help customers and provide a prompt service' 					
9. Introduce Customer Focus Groups.	PMP 2.	To ensure effective feedback from customers to allow mgt to take improvement actions.	Focus group guidelines and procedures to be identified by July 2001. Interested customers to be identified and to have held first meeting by December 2001.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
10. Consider implementation of Staff Focus Groups.	PMP 5.	To ensure effective feedback from staff to allow mgt to take improvement actions.	Focus group guidelines and procedures to be identified by July 2001. Interested staff to be identified and to have held first meeting by December 2001.	Assessment of customer and staff satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from staff focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.
11. Prepare and implement Facility Action Plans following Quest Mystery Visits.	PMP 8 but also 2, 5, 6 & 9.	To ensure effective feedback from customers to allow mgt to take improvement actions.	Facility Action plans to be produced within one month of receipt of Visit Report.	Assessment of customer and staff satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer and staff focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.

TIME CAPSULE - IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

12. A list of Strengths and Area For Improvement have been derived from the EFQM Self Assessment and is contained within Appendix 17 and the Actions are contained in Appendix 19.	PMP 2 but also 5, 6, 7 & 9.	Improve levels of customer and staff satisfaction.	As indicated in Appendix 19.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from Customer and Staff Focus Groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001 - 2002.
13. Evaluate responses from QFD exercise and implement improvements where possible.	PMP 2 but also 5, 6, 7 & 9.	Improve levels of customer and staff satisfaction.	To complete evaluation by March 2001. Implement improvements, where possible, by March 2002.	Assessment of customer satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from Customer and Staff Focus Groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001 - 2002.
14. Seek certification for Quest UK Quality Scheme.	PMP 8 but also 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 10.	To implement a quality scheme which ultimately leads to an improved service for the customers and increased job satisfaction for the staff.	To be formally assessed by April 2002.	Quest registration to be sought. Assessment of customer and staff satisfaction from next Servqual survey and feedback from customer and staff focus groups.	To be detailed in Business Plan 2001-2002.