



Rochford District Council

Project Title: Rayleigh leisure Centre

Project Outline: During the late 1990s Rochford District Council had been leaders in the field of the development of public / private partnerships for the management of their Leisure facilities utilising private sector expertise and investment to enhance their facilities. The Clarkson Alliance had previously successfully Project Managed the first phase of the District's leisure re-development plans with an extensive alterations and refurbishment project at their largest centre to provide stunning new gym facilities, café & entrance and extensive enhanced facilities refurbishment.

The Rayleigh Leisure Centre was the next phase of the Districts leisure development plan to utilise an 11acre disused school site for the provision of a flagship new-build dry sports facility with, as the centre piece, the regions only international sized indoor bowls hall.

The Clarkson Alliance were appointed for a comprehensive Project Management role including Cost Management and Design Services, with The Client placing a strong emphasis on the Clarkson Alliance's specialist health sector expertise to ensure an outstanding blend of the local community needs and health club facilities that could compete in the private market.

Project Manager & Cost Manager: Katherine Gowing

Design Team:

Architect – Alex Afnan – A3 Architects

Buildings Services Consultant – Peter Deer & Associates

Structural Engineer- Ward Cole Consulting engineers

Scope

The resulting development was an elegantly designed steel frame building which extended to 3,600m² on 3.2acres of the available site. The design set out to create an aesthetic envelope for the entrance and complementary facilities to wrap round the mass of the sports hall spaces and to introduce softening curves to the roof and walls to enhance the potential visual impact of such a large building.

The District's brief put the international sized 6 lane bowls hall at the centre of the design, together with a sports hall to accommodate 4 badminton courts, tennis and basket ball. To complement these facilities the building incorporated 2 squash courts, a club standard gym, an aerobics studio, a crèche, changing facilities, a café and lounge viewing area. The core of the external facilities was the requirement for 2 multi-use external pitches which could be utilised for five-a-side football, tennis, hockey and netball and to cater for the local youth community a small skate board park was incorporated.

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The entrance design was considered a key to achieving the visual impact and the functionality for the facility. To achieve this Architect incorporated both internal and external curved wall and timber panelling, together with high level glazing to give the facility a light, modern and inviting environment.

Aims

The aim of the project was to allow the District to complement its existing Centre with facilities required by a broader cross-generational section of the Community. However, as part of the overall private sector leisure management contract, it was fundamental that the new Centre must satisfy the commercial needs of both the District and their private sector partner, and in doing so the focus was placed strongly on a business-case strategy which would ensure profitability of the Centre.

Challenges

The most significant challenge faced in meeting the aim of the project was that of matching the District's brief requirements with limitations of the available funding.

The Design Team were involved in major Value Engineering and re-design exercises during the pre-contract stages to ensure that the Centre provided all the facilities required within the budget. Among the exercises carried out were

- full reviews of the location of the building on the site to optimise access and orientation
- review of the site levels to optimise the use of the existing topography,
- detailed internal special review to minimize excess space whilst maintaining functionality
- detailed specification review and cost checking exercise to ensure the most cost effective design
- stringent tender process to ensure best market price

Once appointed the Main Contractor bought in to the shared responsibility of achieving the most efficient design and construction and assisted with further detailed post-contract value engineering and made effective cost savings proposals throughout the life of the project.

The Clarkson Alliance was proud to have managed the Team to deliver on time and within budget, a facility that meets all the District's brief requirements at a standard comparable with any private facility.

Solution / business benefits

The overall success of the Centre and the mix of facilities it provides has fully satisfied the aims of the project. In particular:

- The opening of the new Centre has enabled the District to satisfy a keen demand for indoor bowling facilities from the local community and has brought in a significant income stream from bowling clubs outside the area to ensure that the business case for the Bowling hall has been more than satisfied.
- The private sector partner achieved their 6 month gym and centre member numbers within 3 months of opening, and membership numbers have been sustained over the longer term to fully justify the profit generation required by the leisure management business case.

- The District has fulfilled its need to satisfy the wider cross-generational sporting needs of its local community, be it the older generation playing bowls or the younger generation on the skate park.

Aspect of the project that relate directly to TCA's project management style

The Clarkson Alliance used their cross-disciplinary professional skills to manage the design, procurement and construction processes to deliver a project on time, within budget and to standard.

The appointment of The Clarkson Alliance for the comprehensive Project Management role provided the client with a single point of responsibility for the whole project process and assisted the District in their communications and briefing processes.

The Clarkson Alliance's experience with private sector leisure providers ensured clear liaison and priority setting between the District and private leisure management company to ensure a business- case focused approach to delivery of the District's new facility.

The Clarkson Alliance's approach to the NEC change management process created a construction environment conducive to management of risk to mitigate financial risk and to engender cost saving proposals from the Main Contractor.

Value of overall project: £3,400,000

Duration: Completed Spring 2006

Clients Comments:

"The quality of service from The Clarkson Alliance is excellent. It has been very professional. All of their consultants were very knowledgeable in their area, very efficient throughout and the end product was very good"

Jeremy Bourne, Head of Community Services,
Rochford District Council.