

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Leisure Services Committee held, in committee, in the Committee Room, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh BT8 6RB, on Tuesday, 13 December 2005 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:- Alderman M Copeland (in the Chair)
Alderman J Norris
Councillor Mrs A M Beattie
Councillor J Beattie
Councillor Mrs J Cochrane (from 7.40 pm)
Councillor Mrs S Duncan
Councillor A Ramsey
Councillor C Tosh

IN ATTENDANCE:- Director of Finance & Leisure Services, Area Officer and Assistant Members' Services Officer.

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Alderman Mrs G Rice, Councillors M Henderson, T Jeffers and Ms J Bunting

Alderman Copeland welcomed Members to the meeting.

LS/2005/74: MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 3 NOVEMBER 2005, AND THE LEISURE/TECHNICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES JOINT WORKING GROUP OF 5 NOVEMBER 2005

Noted.

MATTERS ARISING

Minute LS/2005/58 – The Director of Finance & Leisure reported that to date he had been unable to investigate as to the cost of stationery, the distribution of hard copies of agendas and related administration. He hoped to discuss the matter with the Director of Administration & Community Services and report back.

Minute LS/2005/61 – The Director of Finance & Leisure Services informed Members that, following the Robinson Centre Redevelopment Working Group meeting, he attended a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Sports Council.

This positive meeting was then followed up with a further meeting, involving the MP for East Belfast, Peter Robinson MP MLA (at the request of the Sports Council's Chief Executive). The Council's Chief Executive and the Director of Finance & Leisure Services also attended the latter meeting.

The Director informed the Committee that the 50-metre pool had been discussed at the meeting with the MP, and it was a constructive meeting. The Director added that he would provide a further update at the next meeting.

Minute LS/2005/63 – Resolution (a) delete: That Councillor Beattie take on the task, and insert: That the Director of Finance & Leisure Services take on the task.

Minute LS/2005/68 – The Area Manager advised that the best time to advertise regarding the donation of bicycles would be during the bi-annual sport relief event. He hoped to be able to report in more detail at the January Committee meeting.

Minute LS/2005/73 – The Director of Finance & Leisure Services advised that the Council had so far not advertised for tenders in respect of sponsorship for the enhancement of roundabouts in the Borough.

Minute LS/2005/69 – The Director informed Members that, due to the funeral for George Best, the presentation had been postponed and would hopefully be held at the January Committee meeting in the Lough Moss Centre.

Minute LS/2005/70 – The Director of Finance & Leisure Services stated that he hoped to be in a position to prepare a revenue case for the purchase of a 30-seater minibus. Alderman Copeland suggested that a bus using multi-fuel would be the most economical, and he informed Members that grants of up to 80% were available for such a purchase. The Director replied that all possibilities were being investigated at present and that the Grants Officer was working on the matter.

Minute LS/2005/72 – The Director reported that he had written to the Minister for Sports regarding the availability of funding towards hosting the Special Olympics in Northern Ireland.

Minute LS/2005/72 – Councillor Cochrane advised that the Club restaurant telephone number still had not been changed with directory enquiries 118500. The Director stated that he would correct this.

Minute L&TSJWG/2005/02 – Page 2, first paragraph, first line: delete 'the newly constructed', and insert 'pitches belonging to'.
- Page 2, second paragraph, first line: replace 'both' with 'the'.
- Page 4, second bullet point: delete '2'.

- Page 4, delete third bullet point.
- Page 6, resolution (b): add 'the specifications to be first approved by the Sports Council to ensure that the grant funding criteria are fully adhered to'.
- Page 6, resolution (c): add 'However, if funding became available, it might be possible to consider any extension of the pavilion for further changing rooms.

REPORT FROM THE AREA MANAGER

LS/2005/75: PRESENTATION ON POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOUGH MOSS FACILITY

The Area Manager advised that the presentation had been cancelled due to George Best's death, and he asked Members' approval to hold it at the January Committee meeting instead.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be held in Lough Moss Centre at the January Committee meeting.

LS/2005/76: CLOSURE DAYS

The Robinson, Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres will be closed on the following days:

- Robinson Centre - 25/26/27/28 December 2005 and 1 January 2006
- Belvoir and Lough Moss Centres – 24/25/26/27 December 2005 and 1 January 2006

The Area Manager informed Members that these arrangements reflect the level of expected business, and staff would take annual leave to cover the closures in order to fulfil their contracted hours.

Noted.

LS/2005/77: CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR / HEALTH AND ACTIVITY PROMOTIONS

The Area Manager reported that, in an effort to attract customers to the swimming pool during this usually quiet period in the Robinson, Belvoir and Lough Moss Centres, it had been decided to reduce admission charges as follows:

- 19-23 December 2005 – Junior swims reduced from £1.60 to £0.50
- 24 December 2005 – Free junior swims all day

There would be no change to prices for adults, and children under the age of eight must be accompanied by an adult.

The Manager further stated that Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres intend to hold a 'sports taster' day on 31 December 2005, subject to the availability of qualified coaches. Sporting activities that are not as popular will be offered free of charge to under 16s in the hope that this will create interest in the future. This promotion is in line with the Council's objective to encourage a healthy lifestyle, especially in the young.

Councillor Duncan enquired how the promotion would be advertised. The Area Manager replied that the intention was to place notices in all schools in the area and the local press.

Alderman Copeland suggested that the 'sports taster' day could be advertised on the Council's website, and a voice message could also be left on the automated telephone information service.

Councillor Tosh raised concerns about the coaching aspect. The Area Manager advised that, without qualified coaches, the promotion could not take place, but he hoped that they coaches would be available.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council be recommended to approve admission charges in the Robinson, Belvoir and Lough Moss Centres be reduced as follows: 19-23 December 2005 – Junior swims reduced from £1.60 to £0.50; 24 December 2005 – Free junior swims all day
- (b) That the Director of Finance & Leisure Services arrange for the Council's website to be updated to include future promotions.

LS/2005/78: UNDER 16 USE OF FITNESS FACILITIES

The Area Manager outlined plans to allow 12-15-year olds to use the fitness suite, excluding sauna/spa/steam room, at agreed times. This would be in conjunction with Breathe/Eze Fitness, and their staff would provide supervision and induction where necessary.

The Manager continued by saying that leisure staff were investigating the possibility of providing a purpose-built fitness facility for 5-11-year olds. He added that he would provide an update at the January Committee meeting.

Noted.

LS/2005/79: INCLUSIVE / MULTI ACTIVITY TICKET

The Area Manager sought Members' views to an offer of inclusive/multi activity tickets, which would allow customers to use more than one facility at a discounted price. As swimming was the most popular activity, the Manager had provided the following proposals:

Adult swim + sauna/spa	£4.50 off peak price
Over 60s swim	£6.00 peak price
Tea/coffee and scone	£0.50 when purchased together with swim/sauna
Over 60s swim + sauna/spa	£3.00 at any time (with/without tea/coffee + scone)
Over 60s swim + tea/coffee and scone	£1.00 at any time when purchased together

These offers would be subject to the opening times of the centre café and availability. Specialist coffees and hot chocolate would be charged at an additional £0.25.

The Area Manager anticipated that these offers would result in increased profit.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the following proposals for inclusive/multi activity tickets:

Adult swim + sauna/spa	£4.50 off peak price
Over 60s swim	£6.00 peak price
Tea/coffee and scone	£0.50 when purchased together with swim/sauna
Over 60s swim + sauna/spa	£3.00 at any time (with/without tea/coffee + scone)
Over 60s swim + tea/coffee and scone	£1.00 at any time when purchased together

LS/2005/80: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANNUAL PRICING POLICY 2006-07

The Area Manager stated that price recommendations for the next financial year were currently being considered, and he anticipated the average rise to be 4%, with the following exceptions:

- School prices would remain during the academic year September to June.

- Castlereagh College, as one of the biggest supporters of Lough Moss Centre, would still benefit from the lower rate, as any increase might result in loss of business.
- The Senior Citizens Group's use of Belvoir Activity Centre would remain unchanged.

Councillor Duncan was of the view that it was unfair that community groups in areas without community facilities were forced to pay higher charges for the use of leisure centres. The Director of Finance & Leisure Services reminded Members that funding was available from Community Services to cover these differences, and he agreed to investigate and report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Director of Finance & Leisure Services investigate available funding from the Government to subsidise admission charges to leisure centres in areas without a community centre and report back to the Committee at the January meeting.

LS/2005/81: UNIFORMS

The Area Manager outlined an arrangement between the Council and Coca-Cola, which allowed each centre to purchase uniforms, ie polo shirts and tracksuits, free of charge, provided the Coca-Cola logo is evident. The CBC logo could be embroidered on the clothing at a charge of £1.00 per item, which would be paid by the centres.

The Manager added that the purchase of these polo shirts and tracksuits would provide a substantial saving in the uniform budget, which covered more than 100 staff members, as well as improving staff appearance and making them easily recognisable. However, the purchase had to be made before the end of December 2005, therefore the Manager sought Members' approval to go ahead.

Alderman Copeland recalled that there was an issue at the Billy Neill Centre where Coca Cola were not permitted to sponsor a football league for young children and he was therefore he was concerned that this might cause problems for the Council. The Area Manager agreed to contact Coca-Cola in order to enquire how this regulation would affect the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Area Manager contact Coca-Cola in order to enquire regarding the issue and if there was an opportunity to promote another brand than Coca Cola.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LS/2005/82: LOCKERS

Councillor Duncan reported that she had received complaints from customers regarding the lockers in the Robinson Centre, in that coins were often rejected and the lockers did not function properly. She added that Lisburn Leisure Centre had installed lockers with magnetic locks.

The Area Manager replied that there had been complaints from other centres also. He explained that the existing lockers were 15 to 20 years old and needed to be replaced, therefore he sought Members' views as to how to proceed. There had already been preliminary talks with the supplier of lockers to the Ice Bowl.

Alderman Copeland agreed that the best way forward might be to instal new lockers. He was of the view that customers would not mind paying a small charge if the lockers were in good working order.

Alderman Norris thought that lockers that operated with magnetic locks would be a good option, as customers could use these repeatedly without having to pay.

Noted.

LS/2005/83: PHOTOCOPIER

The Area Manager sought Members' views regarding the purchase or lease of a new photocopier for the use in Lough Moss, Belvoir and Robinson Centres. The Director of Finance & Leisure Services had obtained information in respect of the cost, and he informed Members that the capital cost for the purchase of a photocopier would be £5,475. However, if the Council decided to lease a photocopier, the cost would be approximately £900 per annum, and after seven years the copier would belong to the Council. He added that Breathe/Eze Fitness had expressed an interest to join the Council in partnership to lease or purchase a new photocopier.

Members expressed concern that the Council already had a graphic designer and a colour photocopier, and asked if this resource could not be shared among the three centres. The Area Manager confirmed that, yes, the graphic designer and her colour photocopier could be used by the centre, but it was not convenient for daily photocopying.

RESOLVED: That the Director of Finance & Leisure Services and the Area Manager bring back a business case to the next meeting regarding the purchase of a photocopier.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & LEISURE SERVICES

LS/2005/84: PERFORMANCE-RELATED PAY – THE ROBINSON CENTRE

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services informed Members that he had discussed performance-related pay with the Assistant Managers in the Robinson Centre. The objectives as outlined in the framework document had been applied, and the target had been set at £200,000. At present the trading deficit stood at £260,000, and if the Assistant Managers achieved an improvement to within 10% of the target, they would be eligible for performance-related pay. The Director added that, due to the anticipated VAT repayment, and taking account of excessive sickness levels, then the adjusted trading deficit would be within the target.

Members expressed concern at the methodology and asked the Director to bring back a detailed report to the next meeting, showing evidence that the possible VAT recoupment was taken into account when the PRP was agreed with the Assistant Managers.

RESOLVED: That the Director of Finance & Leisure Services prepare a detailed report in respect of the PRP for the Assistant Managers at the Robinson Centre for the 2004-05 years and report back to the next meeting.

LS/2005/85: LEISURE CENTRE ACCOUNTS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services presented the leisure centre accounts for the period 1 April 2005 to 31 October 2005. He continued to say that currently the VAT inspector was examining a claim for partial exemption, and, if successful, the current deficit of £131,585 would be reduced to a total of £46,453. He added that he was preparing a business case for the purchase of a 30-seater bus, and the Department's Plant Manager was working on the following three energy-saving projects:

- (a) **Robinson Centre**
It was hoped to instal a CHP plant at a cost of £181,000, and the Director was trying to obtain grant aid of 100%. The revenue savings were estimated to be approximately £35,000 per annum.
- (b) **Lough Moss**
The Director outlined plans to instal a wind turbine at a cost of £197,000, and he was hopeful that a grant of £157,000 would be available. The savings were estimated to be approximately £17,000 per annum.
- (c) **Belvoir Activity Centre**
The Director informed Members of plans to instal solar panels at an estimated cost of £17,000, and he hoped that grant aid of 50% could

be obtained. The savings were estimated to be approximately £3,500 per annum.

The Director reported that the strategy, which had been set up two years previously, was working, as there was a month-by-month improvement in the reduction of net costs of the centres.

Members entered into discussion regarding steps that could be taken in order to generate more income. Suggestions included tendering for advertising of floor space by Alderman Copeland, improvement of catering facilities in Lough Moss Centre was proposed by Councillor AM Beattie, Councillor Duncan felt that special offers or vouchers could be made available for Christmas, or soft toys or hats with the Lough Moss logo could be sold. Councillor J Beattie suggested that advertising material could be sent to residents with their rates bill.

RESOLVED: That the Director of Finance & Leisure Services provide a further update at a future Committee meeting, including a possible think tank meeting, involving the Leisure Centre management.

LS/2005/86: CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB RESTAURANT ACCOUNTS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services tabled the accounts for the restaurant for the period 1 April 2005 to 30 November 2005.

The Director informed Members that the income generated did not match the predictions. However, steps had been taken in order to make improvements, for example, the restaurant no longer employed agency staff, as there was no need to have staff present all day. The restaurant was also trying to generate income from advertising.

The Director reported that the restaurant had received approximately 1,500 bookings for Christmas, therefore he predicted that income would double in December. The latest income mark-up figure available was 217% as compared to the previous month's figure of 201%.

The Director was of the view that the Restaurant Manager should investigate as to how savings could be made, for example, overheads. Alderman Copeland felt that the choice of food was well balanced and that the staff were efficient. However, he added that savings could possibly be made in staff costs.

Noted.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 9.35 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Adopted by the Council this _____ day of
_____ 2005 with the exception of
Minute Nos. _____

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE