

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Leisure Park Board held, in committee, in the Board Room at Dundonald International Ice Bowl on Monday 19 September 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

- PRESENT:** Alderman P D Robinson
M Long
- ALDERMEN:** G Rice
- COUNCILLORS:** J Bunting (until 6.40 p.m.)
D Drysdale
T Jeffers
G Robinson
J White
- APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received on behalf of Alderman Mrs I Robinson and Councillors Beattie and Hanvey, and also from Councillor Bunting who would be leaving the meeting early.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Director of Finance & Leisure Services, Business Manager, Operations Manager, Economic Development Manager, Technical Manager, Marketing Development Officer, Mr Dale Cree (from 8.50 p.m.) and Assistant Members' Services Officer.

LPB/2005/97: MINUTES OF LEISURE PARK BOARD MEETING DATED 20 JUNE 2005

RESOLVED: - Members authorised that the Minutes of the Leisure Park Board meeting, held on 20 June 2005, be accepted as a true and accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

LPB/2005/98: PIRATES ADVENTURE GOLF – PARTY ROOM (MINUTE REF LPB/2005/66 REFERS)

The Operations Manager reported that Mr Hobson had decided not to proceed with the proposal to use a Party Room at the Ice Bowl and instead had made his own arrangement with McDonalds Restaurant. She advised that the Ice Bowl were still promoting and selling party bookings directly, to maximise on this market.

Following a query, Officers clarified that it was Mr Hobson's intention to erect a dome style canopy over the Adventure Golf, similar to the one used by David Lloyd.

Members queried whether planning permission was required; they also sought clarification regarding the current situation in respect of car parking arrangements.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board requested that a meeting be convened with the Director of Finance and Leisure Services, representatives from the Board and Mr Hobson to discuss the way forward, including joint initiatives to market both facilities.

LPB/2005/99: INVOICE FROM KING & GOWDY SOLICITORS (MINUTE REF LPB/2005/90 REFERS)

The Business Manager advised that, as requested, an abatement of this invoice had been sought. The Solicitor confirmed that this work had been charged at a rate of £120.00 per hour, which he felt if challenged would be endorsed by the Taxing Master as a reasonable fee.

RESOLVED: - Members authorised payment of £5606.25 to King & Gowdy Solicitors to cover legal fees for the Restaurant Licence Application at the Ice Bowl.

LPB/2005/100: CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED RE: DIIB FEES (MINUTE REF: LPB/2005/91 REFERS)

The Operations Manager confirmed that she and the Marketing Development Officer, and other Officers had met with the parents who had forwarded the above correspondence.

She advised that due to figure skaters often being members of two different clubs, parents were being faced with two separate sets of registration fees, insurance etc.

The Management Team at DIIB were drafting a proposal for figure skaters to follow the same route as that taken previously by ice hockey, namely, the formation of one Association whilst remaining as two individual Clubs.

She continued, that with the aid of the Council's Sports Development Officer, it was felt that figure skaters could avail of greater funding opportunities, if applications were made through one Association.

Councillor Robinson stated that a representation had already been made to Castlereagh Sports Advisory Committee, in respect of the above matter.

Noted.

LPB/2005/101: CASTLEREAGH SPORTS DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – ICE GRANTS

Councillor Robinson asked Officers to clarify whether any monies were outstanding to the CSDA in respect of Ice Grants.

The Chairman stated that, under Board policy, no grants were issued.

RESOLVED: - Members requested that the Director investigate if any monies were outstanding to the CSDA in respect of Ice Grants.

At this stage in the proceedings, Councillor Ms Bunting left the meeting.

FINANCE REPORT

LPB/2005/102: TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager advised that the Ice Bowl had achieved a surplus in the month of August 2005. In spite of the relatively good weather, which occurred during the month of August, income generated for the month had been well in excess of the figure anticipated. It was felt that the increased income figures had been assisted by the new outdoor attractions i.e. Adventure Golf and Fun Valley.

The Officer added that expenditure continued to be strictly monitored and, with the exception of Fun Valley, each department remained within the budgeted levels.

Trading figures for Fun Valley were then circulated at the meeting.

Members discussed the new attraction with regard to its present situation within the facility, and queried why it closed its operation each night at 7.00 p.m.

The Officers stated that they were already considering more suitable locations for Fun Valley, with a view to a possible relocation closer to the Megazone area, as well as the addition of some further attractions. Furthermore, the possibility of erecting a temporary roofing structure which would enable Fun Valley to run all year, was being pursued.

In response to the Members, the Operations Manager advised that the attraction closed at 7.00 p.m. each night due to a shortage of casual staff, which would again be addressed prior to next season.

The Director asked Members to consider offsetting the purchase cost of Fun Valley against capital receipts, rather than leasing, and Members subsequently

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board agreed that the purchase cost of Fun Valley of £28,100.00 could be offset against Capital Receipts.

LPB/2005/103/: MONTHLY MARKETING REPORT

The Operations Manager introduced the Marketing Development Officer, Caroline Magee, to Members.

The Marketing Officer advised that the increase in sales was attributed to a number of different factors, including the new and additional trade from Fun Valley and Pirates Adventure Golf, an increase in summer scheme bookings and unstable weather conditions during the month of August.

The Marketing Officer then detailed the advertising campaigns for July and August and drew Members' attention to the forthcoming promotions and direct mail campaigns.

She further highlighted the sales packages that would be on offer in the forthcoming months, which included:

- After Formal Package
- Charity Package
- Christmas Package

The Officer then drew Members' attention to the details of the forthcoming Halloween Extravaganza, including a detailed break down of costs and projected sales figures. She stated that this would be one of the largest events that the Ice Bowl had seen in over a decade, with a wide variety of events being held over the entire weekend including a firework display, skateboarding competition and a large under 18's disco.

Alderman Rice referred to the substantial decrease in the cost of the fireworks display and asked Officers to ensure that the event was as spectacular as in previous years.

The Marketing Officer advised that the display would last for approximately 22 minutes, compared to 30 minutes for previous displays.

Members concurred with Alderman Rice and suggested that Officers be given authority to increase the remit of the display and subsequent costs, should they feel this was necessary.

RESOLVED: - Members granted Officers authority to increase the remit of the fireworks display and subsequent costs, should they feel this was necessary to maintain the high standard of displays that had been held in previous years.

At this stage in proceedings, Councillor Jeffers excused himself from the meeting.

LPB/2005/104: PRESENTATION FROM G M CONSTRUCTION

The Director advised Members that Mr Mitchell was still awaiting additional information regarding his proposal to develop a Golf Driving Range. As a result, he would be making his presentation to a future meeting of the Board.

Noted.

LPB/2005/105: ICE KARTING – FEASIBILITY STUDY (COPY CIRCULATED AT MEETING)

Officers referred to their recent site visit to Bracknell, in which they had investigated the feasibility of introducing the sport of Ice Karting to the Ice Bowl.

The Operations Manager referred Members to her report, which detailed the Bracknell operation, including the initial outlay costs that would be involved in setting up a similar facility within the Ice Bowl.

The Operations Manager advised that a delegation of Officers had also visited the Eddie Irvine Sports Centre in Bangor. She referred to the success of this Go-Karting Centre, which targeted both casual passing trade, and large corporate group bookings, charging up to a maximum of £55.00 per person.

Officers concluded that the Ice Bowl would be well equipped to cater for Ice Karting, but recognised that there would be a number of issues relating to ice time that would need addressed.

Members discussed the possibility of holding a trial evening to introduce this sport, and suggested that this could be linked with a charity night, with the proceeds going to the Mayor's charity.

At this stage in the proceedings, Councillor Jeffers re-entered the meeting.

Members discussed the low, medium and high-risk solutions on offer and following consideration it was

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board authorised

- (a) Officers to meet with representatives from Eddie Irvine Sports, to discuss the various options available with a view to establishing Ice Karting at the Ice Bowl, and table a report at a future meeting of the Board;
- (b) Officers arrange for a one night trial session, preferably held prior to the November meeting of the Board and, if possible, be linked to the Mayor's Charity.

LPB/2005/106: SHOKK YOUTH FITNESS PROGRAM (COPY OF REPORT CIRCULATED AT MEETING)

The Operations Manager referred Members to the above report. She advised that SHOKK Ltd. was set up in 1999 in an attempt to tackle childhood inactivity and obesity through Youth Gyms.

Officers were keen to investigate the expansion of the Ice Bowl's potential relationship with SHOKK by targeting the 8-16 year olds, and providing a specifically designed gymnasium for this age group.

She continued that this would involve identifying facilities within the Ice Bowl that could facilitate this new equipment, on a permanent or temporary basis. In addition, it would also be necessary to explore potential funding opportunities that would support this market.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- Officers prepare a report on establishing SHOKK within the Ice Bowl, including detailed costings at each stage for a future meeting of the Board.

REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL MANAGER

LPB/2005/107: ICE RESURFACING MACHINE – SERVICE CONTRACT

The Technical Manager advised that a 12-month service had taken place on the "Olympia" ice resurfacing machine on the 20 July 2005. This was an extensive full service in which several parts required replacement.

The Officer confirmed that as this was a specialised vehicle, there was only one sole supplier available to carry out these works.

RESOLVED: - Members granted retrospective approval for the expenditure of £2267.98 + VAT, to cover the costs of servicing the ice resurfacing machine.

LPB/2005/108: ICE BOWL MAIN ROOF

The Technical Manager advised that the roof of the Ice Bowl was degenerating rapidly, and although many repairs had been carried out over the years, these were now rendered ineffective. He stated that, in his estimation, the only feasible solution was to replace the entire roof of the building.

He commented that due to the complexity and likely cost of such a project, it was essential to commence replacement before leaks in the existing roof structure started to disrupt business at the facility.

He referred to preliminary discussions he had held with a Consultant who had been involved in the design of the new train depot at York Street Train Station. The consultant had indicated that a feasibility report would cost in the region of £13,000.00.

Alderman Robinson questioned if a new roof was actually required and suggested there was merit in postponing work until a new Capital Projects Officer had been appointed, who could progress the project.

Following consideration it was

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board agreed that this matter be deferred until the next meeting of the Board, in the interim, the Director of Finance liaise with the Chief Executive to establish the most cost efficient way of progressing this project.

LPB/2005/109: BOWLING CARPET

The Technical Manager advised that the special effect carpeting installed in Extreme Bowling last year had loosened and stretched and now required lifting and being re-laid. He indicated that as the original Contractor had gone bankrupt, the faults could not be rectified and he estimated that the proposed costs would be in the region of £1500.00.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board authorised the Technical Manager to obtain the necessary quotations for the lifting and re-laying of the carpet in the Extreme Bowling area.

LPB/2005/110: RINK TOILETS – REFURBISHMENT

The Technical Manager advised that work on the above had commenced on Monday 5 September and should be completed by 14 October 2005.

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONS MANAGER

LPB/2005/111: UPDATE ON BELFAST GIANTS

The Operations Manager advised that in recent years, Belfast Giants had been offered ice time free of charge, in order to facilitate advertising for DIIB at the Odyssey.

She reported that negotiations were now taking place with Officers and the Managing Director of Belfast Giants in order to maximise revenue, whilst identifying the development opportunities within the sport.

Noted.

LPB/2005/112: SUMMER LEAGUE – ICE HOCKEY

The Operations Manager advised that the Management Team at the Ice Bowl were currently investigating the possibility of extending this league.

Noted.

LPB/2005/113: REDECORATION OF ICE RINK

RESOLVED: - Members granted Officers permission to proceed with the redecoration of the Ice Rink, providing this expenditure was within the budgeted figures for the Ice Rink.

LPB/2005/114: MIDWEEK USAGE OF BOWLING LANES

The Operations Manager advised that, at present, the Management Team were currently identifying ways to increase and improve business midweek.

Noted.

LPB/2005/115: DJ SERVICE PROVISION

The Operations Manager advised that management were currently reviewing this service to reduce costs.

Members considered whether it was necessary to actually provide a DJ Service and discussed the possibility of reducing the number of nights this service was offered.

The Operations Manager sought Members approval to proceed with investigations into reducing the costs through amateur nights, DJ Schools and celebrity nights.

It was therefore

RESOLVED: - Members authorised the Operations Manager to proceed with preliminary investigations into the provision of a new DJ Service, tabling a report at a future meeting of the Board.

LPB/2005/116: CATERING

The Operations Manager advised that in the absence of the Catering Manager, due to annual leave and sickness, the management team were progressing a number of areas of concern, e.g. opening hours, menus, sales targets etc.

She drew Members' attention to the fact that the staff in the catering section had worked exceptionally hard in the last eight weeks and should be commended for their dedication and commitment.

Noted.

LPB/2005/117: SECURITY MATTERS

The Operations Manager advised that she and the Business Manager were currently reviewing the spiraling costs of the services being provided. She reported that they were currently in negotiations with the service provider to review the contracts and reduce costs and, in addition, new quotations were also being obtained from other service providers.

She further advised that key Members of staff had met with Group 4 security to discuss their concerns in relations to internal security.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board requested that the Operations Manager continue to investigate alternative options in respect of security provision at the facility, and once completed, prepare and table a report for a future meeting of the Board.

REPORT FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

LPB/2005/118: HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

The Officer advised that planning permission was still outstanding in respect of the proposed hotel site and an operator had not yet been secured for the development in question.

Noted.

LPB/2005/119: CINEMA

The Economic Development Manager advised that negotiations between the Omniplex and the purchasers of the cinema site were nearing completion. On advice from the Council's solicitor, the long-stop date had been extended to 31st October 2005 to allow various aspects of the final specifications to be resolved between the two parties.

She continued that it was expected that the completion date would be agreed for 31 October 2005 or shortly after, at which point the outstanding balance of £640,000 would be paid to the Council.

She confirmed that in the interim, the entire cinema site (on both sides of the road) could be used by the Council for overflow car parking etc. on the condition that any damage / changes to the site are rectified in advance of the completion date (at the Council's expense).

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board

- (a) granted retrospective approval for the extension of the long-stop date from 15 September 2005 to 31 October 2005 to allow the final negotiations to be completed;
- (b) granted approval for the appointment of Knox Clayton to compile the requisite lease maps to enable the conveyancing documentation to be effectively concluded.

LPB/2005/120: MINIATURE GOLF COMPLEX - SALE OF ADDITIONAL LANDS

The Economic Development Manager advised Members that the sale of the 0.01 acres of land to Mr Hobson was now completed and the £3,000 agreed fee paid to the Council accordingly.

She continued, that correspondence had been received from Douglas Wheeler at BTW Shiells stating that he had been contacted by Mr Hobson asking if the Council would be willing to sell the car park adjacent to the Adventure Golf Complex at Dundonald (as currently used by Mr Hobson).

Members considered this requested and it was

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board requested that the Economic Development Manager

- (a) obtain the approximate measurements of the site requested and ascertain from BTW Shiells how much Mr Hobson would be willing to pay for the site and report back to the Board accordingly;
- (b) consider the site within the overall concept plan for the facility and prepare a report for a future meeting of the Board.

LPB/2005/121: WAYLEAVE AGREEMENT – CONSARC DESIGN - EASEMENT REQUEST

The Economic Development Manager advised that correspondence had been received from Consarc Design whose clients intended to construct 27 apartments at Hanwood House, 125 Old Dundonald Road, Tullycarnet. As previously reported, the clients were experiencing difficulty in finding an acceptable alternative for disposal of drainage from their site and wished to determine if it would be possible to secure:

- (a) A Wayleave Agreement across Council land;
- (b) Permission to connect into the storm and foul drainage system that runs up to the access road to the David Lloyd Centre.

As requested, the Officer advised that she had contacted Mr Wheeler for his advice and corresponding valuation.

In response, Mr Wheeler had outlined that the difficulty in agreeing to the proposal was that, if the easement was granted, in a best case scenario the Council would not be able to build within three metres of either side of the sewer and in a worst case scenario up to six metres either side. Therefore, in his view, this action would have a detrimental impact on the potential developability of the site.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board authorised Mr D Wheeler to meet with Consarc Design to establish if there is a more appropriate route for the easement in question to allow an effective valuation to be secured.

LPB/2005/122: ADOPTION OF ROUNDABOUT – OLD DUNDONALD ROAD

The Economic Development Manager advised that negotiations between the Roads Service and Doran Consulting in respect of the works outstanding at the Roundabout on the Old Dundonald Road were ongoing.

She confirmed that she had spoken to Colin Foreman at the DOE, who had confirmed that whilst a number of snagging lists had been provided to Doran Consulting over the period 1997-2004, the requisite remedial works had not yet been completed.

She stated that she had written to Doran Consulting asking for a brief report outlining all outstanding works and what steps they intended to take to rectify these matters, in advance of the Leisure Park Board meeting but had not yet received a response.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board requested that the Economic Development Manager continue to pursue her negotiations with Doran Consulting in respect of the works outstanding at the roundabout on the Old Dundonald Road.

LPB/2005/123: INVOICE FOR PAYMENT – TOPOGRAPHICAL STUDY

The Economic Development Manager advised Members that an invoice had been received from Doran Consulting for £750.00 + VAT, in respect of the topographical survey completed at the Adventure Golf site.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board authorised payment of the invoice in respect of the topographical survey for £750.00 + VAT.

LPB/2005/124: SKATEBOARD PLAZA

The Economic Development Manager advised that the DETI would fund 50% of an Economic Appraisal for the above proposal and, in addition, to facilitate the requisite tender process automatically provided a call off list of pre-selected consultants.

She added that the Council's Consultant Mr Dale Cree had written to the six companies on the call of list, but only one had confirmed that they could carry out the appraisal within the set timescale.

Alderman Robinson stated that whilst the Leisure Park Board were favourable to the appointment of Venture International, Council approval should also be sought for their appointment.

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board agreed 'in principle', subject to Council approval, to appoint Venture International to carry out an Economic Appraisal for the Skateboard Plaza, at a cost of £9222.00 + VAT, with 50% of this fee being reclaimed from the DETI.

At this stage in the meeting the Economic Development Manager left the meeting.

PRESENTATION BY COUNCIL'S CONSULTANT MR DALE CREE

LPB/2005/125: STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Mr Cree, Marketing Consultant entered the meeting.

The Marketing Consultant outlined in detail the process and methodology which he intended to use in order to prepare a strategy report which would work in conjunction with the business plan for the Ice Bowl complex.

He asked Members to consider holding a briefing session, as he felt this would be particularly beneficial.

Members agreed that this would be appropriate and following consideration it was

RESOLVED: - Members of the Board agreed to hold a strategy workshop on Wednesday 28 September, with Officers confirming the venue and times with Members of the Board prior to the event.

At this stage in proceedings the Business Manager, Operations Manager, Technical Manager, Marketing Development Officer and Assistant Members' Services Officer left the meeting.

STAFF IN COMMITTEE

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE