

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Central Services Committee held, in committee, in the Members' Committee Room, Civic & Administrative Office, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB on Wednesday, 22nd February 2006 at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT:- Alderman J Norris

Councillor Ms J Bunting
Councillor Mrs M Chambers
Councillor Mrs J Cochrane
Councillor C Hall
Councillor G Robinson
Councillor J Spratt

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors J Beattie, Miss Hughes, Long and Alderman Mrs Rice.

IN ATTENDANCE:- Director of Administration & Community Services,
Community Services Manager and Members'
Services Officer.

CS/2006/54 : CONSIDERATION OF DESIGN SCHEME FOR MONEYREAGH COMMUNITY FACILITY

The Director of Administration & Community Services advised that the Acting Capital Projects Officer had indicated that discussions had taken place with the Planning Service and there were a number of issues to be resolved.

She advised that the matter will be discussed further at the next meeting of the Central Services Committee, and Members agreed that, at the February Council meeting, authorisation would be sought to grant the Committee executive powers in the interim to progress the project further.

She indicated that the maps etc had been sent to the Board of Governors of Moneyreagh Primary School for their meeting of 13 February 2006 and they had reported no problems in relation to site issues. The Council would be submitting correspondence to SEELB asking that their Solicitors release the land as soon as possible.

Councillor Spratt stated that it was important that a public meeting was held in Moneyreagh to give local people the opportunity to discuss the proposed community facility, and that the MP for the area be invited.

The Director responded that the Architects had been informed that there may be some minor design changes arising from the public meeting, which would be taken on board on the proviso that there were no cost implications.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) the Council be recommended to grant the Central Services Committee executive powers to progress the proposed community facility at Moneyreagh.
- (b) following a public meeting at Moneyreagh to discuss the proposed community facility, that the Architects take on board any minor design changes arising from the public discussion, on the proviso that there were would be no cost implications.

CS/2006/55 : CREGAGH FORUM – MEETING TO DISCUSS TRIBUTE MURAL – FOR LATE GEORGE BEST

The Director of Administration & Community Services reported that Cregagh Forum had requested a meeting with Council to discuss removal of a paramilitary mural to be replaced with a tribute for George Best. They had since been advised that they could go ahead and set up a meeting to and prepare a proposal which would then be presented at the next meeting of the Committee and considered by Members during the course of the meeting.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Cregagh Forum meet to prepare a funding proposal, which will be presented at the March meeting of Central Services Committee.

Furthermore, that Officers, when inviting representatives from the Cregagh Forum, refer to the Council's Standing Orders and advise them that only 3 people can represent the Cregagh Forum at the Central Services Committee meeting.

CS/2006/56 : GREENGRAVES DRAMA GROUP

Following a request from Councillor Robinson, the Director reported that Officers would be reporting on this matter at the March meeting of the Central Services Committee.

Noted.

CS/2006/57 : NEW ARTS STRATEGY

The Community Services Manager commented that a new Arts Officer was now in the process of being appointed and should hopefully be in post by 1st April 2006.

Members then discussed the Community Support Plan with regard to funding in relation to the Arts Forum and felt it should be more consistent with the Sport Development procedures, and felt that the Central Services Committee should have a direct input in the programme etc.

The Director stated that the Arts strategy document was presented to Committee and although she appreciated there was a grey area with regard to its interpretation by the Arts Forum, as they had their own terms of reference, the Council did have ownership of the strategy. She felt, however, that the monthly reports from the Community Development staff, including the Arts Officer, would keep the Committee fully briefed.

Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED:- That, once in post, the new Arts Officer will meet with the Councillors on the Arts Forum prior to her meeting with the full Arts Forum to discuss a new Arts Strategy.

CS/2006/58 : CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGY & AUDIT FOR 2006/2007 – DEFERRED FROM THE CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 13 FEBRUARY 2006-03-01

The Director of Administration & Community Services referred to the background of the strategy, which had been based on consultation by Locus Management Consultants several years ago. It had, however, been left open-ended to allow a re-allocation of indicated funding, or change in programmes.

She outlined that she had had some concerns regarding the previous grant process and Community Relations criteria for community groups, and this had since been revised to ensure that the Council had adequate controls in place. She pointed out that 75% of the funding came from CRU, and consequently this body also had to approve the various objectives and programmes in the strategy before funding would be released.

She referred to the new draft Strategy and objectives indicated that the broad area headings had previously been approved by Council, but as a safeguard, all

individual funding applications and projects would be submitted to Committee for approval, as they occurred throughout the year.

Councillor Robinson asked for an assurance from Officers that any funding applications coming before Committee, in future, be linked to this Community Relations Strategy.

The Director referred to Aim 3 of the Audit & Strategy document in relation to Target Groups – Budget Heading: Community Relations/Youth/Senior Citizens – and the £10,000 indicative costs to promote the Cross Community Summer Scheme. She advised that the Council had always run the scheme and the funding had been offset against the mainstream summer scheme budget.

With regard to the £2,500 Aim 3 intergeneration work allocated to further develop the senior citizens programme, she stated that the CRU had been unhappy that the Council were subsidising the senior citizens tea dances, as the cross community element of this project was minimal. She, therefore reiterated that the Council had been advised this year to look at programmes within the £2,500 allocated funding, which would encourage greater cross community participation.

Councillor Spratt referred to Torbank Special School and asked if it could be supported through the Council's summer scheme project.

The Director of Administration & Community Services advised Members that this subject had been raised in the past and, she clarified that the Torbank Summer scheme was not a Council run scheme and was restricted to pupils within Torbank. She further added that suggestions had been made to Torbank that they run a scheme for disabled children per se, not just specifically for their pupils, and that they include a catchment area from across the entire Borough. However, they were unable to facilitate this request due to operational resources. The Director indicated that the various factors had been considered at previous Estimates Meeting but, as the Council had not funded the summer scheme last year, funding had not been written into the estimates for the forthcoming year.

Councillor Spratt was disappointed that funding could not be provided under the auspices of Community Relations, as there were a lot of disabled children attending Torbank, resident in the Castlereagh Borough.

The Director replied that by allocating funding to Torbank, the Council would be further reducing its own budget for the 10 schemes, which had already been cut by £10,000.

Councillor Chambers stated that in the past, Councils had helped to fund summer schemes, but over the years, the SEELB had withdrawn more and more funding and the Director confirmed that the Council were now funding 100% of

summer scheme programmes, with the exception of the use of Moneyreagh Youth Mobile which was supplied by the SEELB.

Councillor Bunting asked if more funding could be allocated under the “single identity” heading, in order to promote Castlereagh’s cultural identity and its connection with the Ulster Scots

Councillor Bunting then expressed her disappointment that the Government had placed cultures in a position whereby they were competing for funding and status, and as the Castlereagh Borough was predominantly protestant she felt there was a need for ratepayers to understand the richness of the Ulster Scots culture. She went on to state that there was an urgent need to educate and promote the Ulster Scots heritage within the Borough, especially as 2006 was an extremely important year in Ulster Scots history.

Members agreed that page 6 of the draft Audit & Strategy document be amended to read “promote Castlereagh’s cultural heritage through single identity work”

Councillor Bunting further proposed that Mr Mark Thompson be invited to a future Council meeting to make a presentation on Ulster Scots heritage once the new Arts Officer was in post. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Robinson.

Members then referred to Aim 4 in relation to Bonfires and the Director outlined that the Council had allocated £2,000 to the Tidy Bonfire initiative. She referred to the views expressed by Councillor Drysdale in which he was keen to promote the cultural side of Bonfire festivities leading up to the 11th July, as well as Tidy Bonfires.

Councillor Bunting commented on the need to differentiate between bonfire festivities and a “street party” and it was important to have a programme, which included more events than just social activity.

Members then discussed the indicative costs involved and Councillor Robinson suggested that the £5,000 funding set aside under Aim 6 - Elected Members’ training, be reduced to £1,000 and the remaining £4,000 be allocated to Aim 2 “promote cultural heritage through single identity work”

Councillor Robinson proposed that a group be set up as soon as possible to deal with the allocation for funding for single identity work, with the meeting being serviced by the Community Relations Officer.

Members then discussed Aim 6 and the provision of Elected Member training to discuss sensitive community relations issues within the context of the Council’s Good Relations duty.

Councillor Robinson referred to the Bromley-by-Bow project, which was a fantastic concept, and he felt a visit to experience it at first hand would be of more benefit to the Council as it addressed intergenerational issues rather.

The Community Services Manager suggested that the visit to Bromley-By-Bow project be followed with a visit and discussion with ethnic minority groups, this could replace the training, which was not being taken up in this year's Community Relations budget.

Councillor Cochrane further indicated there would be merit in holding a structured workshop the morning following the visit to discuss how this project could be put to practical use within the Borough.

The Community Services Manager stated that he would check the costs of a visit and availability and would ascertain if the CRU would be willing to fund the visit.

Members agreed that those Councillors who have already visited the Bromley-by-Bow project should not be included in this visit.

Members then agreed that, subject to CRU funding, the visit to Bromley by Bow be scheduled for Tuesday, 28th March, returning the afternoon of Wednesday, 29th March and that the Ballyoran Advisory Committee meeting date be rescheduled.

The Director of Administration & Community Services commented that should the CRU not permit the Council to use the funding for Elected Members training in this manner, Officers would arrange for the resources to be re-allocated to Members' training from VCU grant monies.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Members accepted the Draft Community Relations Audit & Strategy with the exception of a number of amendments, namely:-
 - Members agreed that page 6 of the draft Audit & Strategy document be amended to read "to promote acceptance of Castlereagh's cultural diversity (Ulster Scots) through music and dance and storytelling...."
- (b) Councillor Robinson asked for an assurance from Officers that any funding applications coming before Committee, in future, be linked to this Community Relations Strategy.
- (c) Following a proposal from Councillor Bunting, that Mr Mark Thompson be invited to a future Council meeting to make a presentation on Ulster Scots heritage once the new Arts Officer was in post.

- (d) The Council be recommended to authorise that a group be set up as soon as possible to deal with the allocation for funding for single identity work, with the meeting being serviced by the Community Relations Officer.
- (e) Members agreed that a visit to Bromley by Bow be scheduled for Tuesday, 28th March, returning the afternoon of Wednesday, 29th March, subject to CRU funding, with officers determining if this can be allocated from Training Budget for 2005.
- (f) Members agreed that those Councillors who have already visited the Bromley-by-Bow project should not be included in this visit.
- (g) That, the Officers arrange for the re-scheduling of the Ballyoran Advisory Committee meeting scheduled to take place on 29th March 2006.
- (h) Members agreed that, should the CRU not permit the Council to use the funding for Elected Members training in this manner, that Officers check if VCU would be willing to cover cost.

WORK PROGRAMME REPORTS
(Deferred from Central Services Committee – 13 February 2006)

CS/2006/59 : REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER, REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY SPORTS OFFICER, REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY ARTS OFFICER, REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER – TULLYCARNET, BALLYBEEN, MONEYREAGH, REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER – BELVOIR, CREGAGH, NEWTOWNBRED, REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER – CLONDUFF, BRANIEL & CARRYDUFF & REPORT FROM THE CAPACITY BUILDING OFFICER

Members went through the various reports and asked a number of questions of the Officers regarding the content. A number of specific points/observations were raised in this regard, to include:-

- Community Safety Partnership – the lack of involvement of Elected Members
- The role of the Officers on such partnerships and the fact that authority had not been cleared in advance from the Council in terms of their attendance and involvement
- Funding for Community Safety Programme and the need for this matter to be raised again with the LSP

- The role of the Council's Community Development Worker and the spread of their geographic areas across the Borough
- The lack of detail in their report including actual work outputs of the individual workers concerned
- The need to provide further details of what was actually achieved during that month, and outcomes of each of the various meetings undertaken by the Officers
- A need to link the Community Support Plan to the work objectives – a need for a proforma document to be devised so that all workers are completing the new reports consistently
- The lack of detail in several Officers' reports
- Potential duplication of work with other Officers both internally and externally
- Support requirements of the Sports Development Advisory Committee
- The role of the Arts Committee
- The need to expand the Community Development service into rural areas
- Need to provide a more detailed list of attendances at meetings, a list of specific work undertaken - to include timescale, time measurement and objectives
- The need to promote the Ulster Scots culture within the Community Relations Programme
- The need to highlight the amount of time spent on trade union activities and to ensure that it was consistent and in accordance with the Council's policy
- The need to provide consistent advice to Groups in terms of developing an agreed model Constitution
- Problems with funding with the "Outside the Box" project and the role of Officers in this regard

After a lengthy discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) A draft Constitution be prepared by Officers to ensure a consistency of approach and that this be submitted to the Committee for their information.
- (b) A proforma be developed to facilitate the presentation of the monthly reports
- (c) A weekly time log be introduced with all meetings etc. recorded, together with outcomes, objectives etc.
- (d) Councillors on the LSP raise their concerns regarding the Community Safety Partnership and the non-involvement of Elected Representatives
- (e) The role of Officers and the non-involvement of Elected Members be examined regarding the “Hate-Crime” project.

CS/2006/60 FUTURE MEETING TO DISCUSS OFFICER’S REPORTS

Members agreed that it was important to meet again to discuss the issues raised.

The Director of Administration & Community Service stated that Members had given very good guidance as to their required objectives and time commitments for the various Officers.

She indicated that as Officers would only have been informed of the new logging procedures, Members might not have adequate information to peruse at the next Central Services Meeting.

RESOLVED:- That, the Director of Administration & Community Services and the Community Services Manager inform the Officers of the change in procedures for recording time management. A report of the weekly logs be prepared by the Community Services Manager and presented to Members of the Central Services Committee listing more detailed information of the work outputs of the various Officers during the course of their daily duties.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 2.20 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Adopted by the Council this _____ day of
_____ 2006 with the exception of
Minute Nos. _____

MAYOR