

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Leisure Services Committee held, in committee, in the Waiting Room, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB on Thursday, 1st February 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Alderman J Norris MBE

Councillor Mrs A M Beattie

Councillor J Beattie

Councillor Ms J Bunting (in at 7.40 pm)

Councillor Mrs J Cochrane

Councillor D Drysdale

Councillor S Duncan

Councillor B Hanvey

Councillor J Spratt (in the chair)

Councillor C Tosh

IN ATTENDANCE:-

Director of Leisure & Finance Services, General Manager of Leisure & Marketing, Area Manager (Leisure) and Assistant Members' Services Officer

APOLOGIES:-

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillor Hall

LS/2007/19 : CHAIRING THE MEETING

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Members agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That, Councillor Spratt take the chair for tonight's Leisure Services Committee meeting.

LS/2007/20 : MINUTES

Tabled:- Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee held on 4th January 2007 (copy enclosed)

Noted.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

**LS/2007/21 : OFFER OF SPONSORSHIP FOR A COMMUNITY PROJECT
(Minute Ref No: LS/2007/04 refers)**

The Director of Finance Services advised Members that he would be meeting with Tesco representatives on Wednesday 7th February 2007. In response to a query by Councillor Duncan, he advised that the amount of sponsorship funding had not yet been specified. The Director indicated that it was his intention to investigate funding opportunities for the Belvoir project.

Noted.

**LS/2007/22 : SECURITY FENCE AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE (Minutes
Minute Ref No LS/2007/08 refers)**

The Area Manager (Leisure) advised Members that the new security fencing for the rear of the Robinson Centre was now in place.

Noted.

**LS/2007/23 : BELVOIR DEVELOPMENT (MULTI-PURPOSE PITCH)
(Minute Ref No LS/2007/10 refers)**

The Area Manager (Leisure) referred to a letter received by the Chief Executive from a parishioner in relation to the proposed pitch at Belvoir and he indicated that he had been asked to raise the matter of operating hours for the proposed facility so that some assurances could be given to Pastor McIlwrath. He stated that, in discussions with Pastor McIlwrath to date, the main issue had been the possible interruption to the Church's Sunday services. He stated that, whilst both Members and officers had tried to reassure the Pastor that it might be possible to refrain from taking bookings on Sunday mornings and evenings, it was apparent that he was looking for categorical confirmation that no bookings would be taken on Sunday mornings and evenings during service times.

The Area Manager reminded Members that, since receipt of the letter, Pastor McIlwrath had made a presentation to the full Council on Thursday 25th January 2007 and there had been a resolution that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would visit the proposed site to assess if there was an option to move the proposed pitch further away from the church.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that officers would ascertain times of Sunday services with a view to introducing restricted opening on a Sunday afternoon and to close the pitch while morning and evening services were in progress.

- (b) that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would report back to the Council after the proposed site visit.

LS2007/24 : RESERVOIR DEVELOPMENT (Minutes Ref No LS/2007/11 refers)

The Area Manager (Leisure) reported that he had been in contact with the Group that had met with the Leisure Services Committee in connection with the reservoir development project. He stated that they were keen to arrange a meeting with the Council to discuss progress. Councillor Hanvey expressed concern that a project that could be very beneficial to the area would be blocked because the Water Service would not release the land.

RESOLVED: That the Area Manager (Leisure) should arrange a meeting to progress the reservoir development project as soon as possible.

LS/2007/25: CONTAINER FOR BELVOIR (Minute Ref No. LS/2007/12 refers)

The Area Manager (Leisure) confirmed that the container was now on site and that arrangements were being made to transfer the protective carpet from DIIB to Belvoir.

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE AREA MANAGER (LEISURE)

LS/2007/26 : FITNESS SUITE PRICES

The Area Manager (Leisure) reported that core pricing strategy (2007-2008) for the Robinson, Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres had been presented to Committee in January 2007. He advised that prices relating to gym admission and aerobics based classes (which were run in partnership with Eze Fitness) had been omitted to allow further research on competition prices. After reviewing the current market charges he made the following recommendations for the forthcoming financial year. He stated that the "Platinum" price had only risen by £0.50 because of competition from other fitness operators, particularly from JJB Sports who were expected to expand their operation in NI considerably in the next 2 months.

Although it was normal practice that leisure prices were reviewed on an annual basis, the Area Manager requested permission from the Committee to review fitness suite prices throughout the year and to make recommendations for changes when applicable.

Additions/amendments to the pricing policy

Breathe fitness prices:

| Current price | Recommendation |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Platinum Membership £29.50 DD pm | £30.00 |
| Annual Membership Platinum (one off) £325.00 | £330.00 |
| Gold Membership DD pm £27.00 | £28.00 |
| Annual Membership Gold (one off) £290.00 | £300.00 |
| Silver Membership DD pm £21.00 | £23.00 |
| Annual Membership Silver (one off) £220.00 | £230.00 |
| Annual off peak platinum (one off) £240.00 | £250.00 |
| Corporate DD pm (general) £23.00 | £25.00 |
| Corporate DD pm (Shorts) £ 19.00 | £21.00 |
| CBC Corporate DD pm £19.00 | £19.00 |
| Pay and play (gym) £4.40 | £4.60 |
| Activity class (pay and play)£ 3.30 | £3.50 |
| Activity class (pay and play)£ 3.80 | £4.00 |

Competition prices

The Area Managers advised that these comparisons had been based as closely as possible on CBC/Breathe's Platinum Membership (£29.50 pm by DD). He also advised that membership prices were largely based on a monthly DD or cash payment transaction.

- Avoneil LC - £28.00* currently under review
- Lisburn LC - £32.10* currently under review
- Ards LC - £33.00* currently under review
- Bangor LC - £32.00 from January 2007
- Esporta - £61.00

Leander Swimming Club early morning sessions

| Current price | Recommendation |
|---------------|----------------|
| £17.50 | £18.50 |

The Area Manager advised that Leander used the Robinson Centre main pool 5 days per week during the swim season and that their hire was based on the use of 3 lanes (6.00am – 8.00am) with the other 3 lanes being used for public swimming. He stated that Leander were one of the Centre's most loyal and longstanding customers and were invoiced for in excess of £10,000 in the last financial year.

Additions to core pricing policy

| Current price | Recommendation |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Adult swim + sauna/spa - £4.50 | £4.60 |
| Adult swim + sauna/spa - £6.00 (peak) | £6.20 |
| Over 60s swim + sauna/spa - £3.00 | £3.00 |
| Over 60s swim + tea/coffee/scone - £1.00 | £1.00 |

It was proposed by Councillor Duncan, seconded by Councillor Tosh and

RESOLVED: that the Council adopt the pricing policies detailed above and that the Area Manager (Leisure) be allowed to review prices through the year and make recommendations for changes when applicable.

LS/2007/27 : LOUGH MOSS ASTRO TURF PITCH

The Area Manager (Leisure) reminded Members that he had highlighted the fact that the astro pitch at Lough Moss was now some 11 years old and rips and tears were being experienced more frequently through normal wear and tear. He stated that it was anticipated that the pitch would have a usable lifespan of no more than 2 years and Council would need to consider its options for a replacement.

The Area Manager reported that Haffey, one of the leading artificial pitch installers in Northern Ireland, had largely been responsible for the repair of the pitch. He stated that Haffey had agreed to make a presentation at the March Leisure Services meeting and would advise on a number of issues –

- Options for current pitch – sand based v sand dressed with relevant costs highlighted.
- Options for additional 5 a side pitch similar to that at Cregagh.
- Potential PFI partnerships with the Council.

RESOLVED: that the Committee receive a presentation from Haffey at its March meeting on options for renewing or replacing the astro turf pitch at Lough Moss

LS/2007/28 : PLASMA SCREENS

The Area Manager (Leisure) reported that, following a question raised by Members regarding the cost of running a plasma screen, he had spoken to the Council's Energy Officer who had advised that a 42" screen would cost in the region of £0.60p per day or £4.20 per week based on 14 hours use per day.

The Area Manager reported that he had spoken to a company that supplied plasma screens for the purposes of advertising within Council facilities and had asked them to put a proposal in writing that would include screens at the

Robinson, Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres. He stated that the agreement would be for a 24 month period and the Council would only derive income in the first twelve months. He stated that, although the company were offering up to 10% income share from the revenue generated, he had asked them to offer a guaranteed minimum income in their proposal. He also advised that he had asked them to confirm insurance arrangements to ensure the Council's position was protected.

The Area Manager pointed out that one of the main benefits for the Council in introducing the plasma screens would be that it would be given 60% of the advertising loop to advertise its own facilities and events. He also pointed out that the costs of purchasing the screens and setting up the graphics etc would be prohibitive if the Council were to try to do this by itself. The Area Manager undertook to report back to the Committee in due course with details of the full proposal.

Noted

LS/2007/29 : EZE FITNESS CONTRACT

The Area Manager (Leisure) reported that officers had met with the Local Government Auditor in connection with the extension of the Eze Fitness Contract. He advised that the Auditor had indicated that he would have no objection to extending the contract as long as the Council could demonstrate that it was getting good value for money and that the contract was in line with similar business partnerships undertaken by other Councils. The Area Manager advised that he had written to other Councils requesting details of their arrangements but he also indicated that it was unlikely that there would be like for like arrangements throughout local government.

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services indicated that the Directors of Eze Fitness were keen to get the contract finalised and signed as they were continuing to invest in the facility. He requested the Committee's agreement for the contract to go direct to Council for approval if both the Auditor and the Council's Solicitor were satisfied with the terms of the contract.

Members expressed concerns about the Council negotiating a new 10 year contract in view of possible RPA implications.

RESOLVED: that the Committee agree that the contract be finalised and signed subject to the agreement of the Local Government Auditor and the Council's Solicitor and to the inclusion, if necessary, of an appropriate clause to cover the implications of RPA.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LS/2007/30 : CLOSING OF CRECHE AT CARRYDUFF

Councillor Hanvey indicated that he had been contacted by a user of the crèche facility at Carryduff who was concerned about the decision to close. Other Members indicated that they had received similar phone calls. The Area Manager (Leisure) advised that the crèche had lost approximately £2,000 in the period from April 06 to end January 07. He reported that the qualified crèche worker had left at short notice and that, although the crèche was currently being covered by staff who were experienced and had undergone child protection screening, it could not be kept open on a long term basis without a qualified member of staff.

In response to Members' queries about promotion of the crèche, the Area Manager (Leisure) reported that 2,000 promotional leaflets had been distributed in October/November 2006 and that the creche was included in the Council's general promotional activities.

The Area Manager (Leisure) reported that he had indicated to crèche users that the Council would keep the crèche open for another three weeks but that the lack of qualified staff would mean it could not be kept open any longer.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED: that the following options would be explored with a view to maintaining the crèche facility at Carryduff:

- Increasing the crèche fee from £1.05 for a two hour session to £2.00 per hour with sessions starting on the hour.
- The Grants Officer would be asked to investigate funding options and the users of the crèche could investigate applying for Awards for All funding.
- Consideration to be given to leasing out the crèche facilities to the private sector, thereby cutting the loss of £2,000 or more per annum whilst still maintaining the facility.
- Contacting the NI Childcare Association with a view to recruiting a qualified crèche worker.

LS/2007/31 : CARRYDUFF PLAYGROUND

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services reported that the sod cutting ceremony for the commencement of work at Carryduff Playground would be

taking place at 12.30 pm on 23 February 2007 and refreshments would be available afterwards in the Leisure Centre.

Noted

LS/2007/32 : WIND TURBINE AT LOUGH MOSS

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services reported that the deadline for grant aid for the turbine was 31st March 2007 but that problems had arisen with obtaining planning approval. He advised that Planning Service had refused the application on the basis that the turbine would interfere with the emergency service analogue. He indicated that the emergency service was going digital in December 07 and the Council could reapply for the grant in October 07.

The Director indicated that the lead time for ordering a turbine was 18 months to 2 years. In view of the issues relating to planning permission and delivery time, he advised that the turbine could not be obtained in this financial year but should be on site by 2009/10.

Councillor Hanvey raised a query over these delays in view of the fact that other turbines were being erected elsewhere without apparent problems. Councillor Spratt referred to a large turbine at Antrim Area Hospital that did not seem to interfere with emergency service operations.

Councillor Spratt also stated that, if a planning application had been made, it had not come before the Council's Planning Committee.

After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Planning Officer and the Energy Conservation Manager be asked to investigate this matter and report back to the Committee

LS/2007/33 : FOOTBALL PITCH AT CARRYDUFF

In response to a query by Councillor Drysdale as to progress with the football pitch at Carryduff, Councillor Spratt advised that the land sales at Carryduff were going through the normal processes and progress on the matter would be reported at the Special Council meeting taking place on 14 February 2007.

Noted.

STAFF IN COMMITTEE

As there was no further business, the meeting ended at 10.00 pm

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Adopted by the Council this _____ day of
_____ 2007 with the exception of
Minute Nos: _____

MAYOR