

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held, in committee, in the Function Suite, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB, on Thursday, 4 October 2007, at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:- Alderman J Norris MBE
Councillor Mrs A M Beattie
Councillor J Beattie
Councillor D Drysdale
Councillor Mrs S Duncan
Councillor B Harvey
Councillor M Long (in the Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:- Director of Leisure Services, General Manager of Leisure & Marketing, Area Manager Leisure, Technical Manager, Capital Projects Manager and Assistant Members' Services Officer

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors Ms Bunting, Mrs Chambers, Hall, Mrs McCoy and Tosh

LS/2007/122 : MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

LS/2007/123 : ROBINSON CENTRE – DDA WORKS

The Capital Projects Manager advised that vertical access needed to be provided in several locations in the Robinson Centre in order to comply with DDA regulations. The areas identified were:

- From the entrance foyer of the café floor level by means of a platform lift
- From the reception of Breathe to the first-floor fitness suite by means of a stair lift
- In the sauna/spa area to the spa pool by means of a stair lift

The Capital Projects Manager stated that building control approval was not required for the stair lifts from the reception of Breathe and from the sauna/spa area, therefore he proposed that quotations be obtained in accordance with Council policy. He anticipated

that the work could be completed by December 2007 at a cost of approximately £10,000 plus VAT.

Building control approval was required for the installation of a platform lift from the entrance foyer to the café floor level. It would be necessary to prepare drawings, specifications and invite tenders. There was a legal requirement to appoint a CDM co-ordinator, and quotations needed to be obtained for this service. The cost was estimated at £25,000 plus VAT, and the Capital Projects Manager confirmed that provision had been made in the Capital Projects budget in the 2007-2008 Estimates. Furthermore, in order to expedite the process, the Capital Projects Manager recommended that the Committee request executive powers for the approval of tenders.

The Capital Projects Manager also informed Members that, recently, a disabled youth had been unable to participate in a training session in the centre due to lack of access.

Councillor Drysdale stated that he was sympathetic to the needs of disabled people, but he felt that the cost of installing lifts had to be considered in light of the ongoing future analysis of the Robinson Centre.

Councillor J Beattie concurred. However, as there was a legal requirement to provide access for disabled persons, he suggested that Officers advertise for tenders in this respect.

Following some further discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council advertise for tenders in respect of the installation of lifts in the Robinson Centre
- (b) That the Committee request executive powers for the approval of tenders in order to expedite the process.

(At the Council meeting held on 25 October 2007, it was resolved that resolution (b) in Minute No. LS/2007/123 above be referred back to the Committee for further consideration – see Minute No.LS/2007/137)

LS/2007/124 : ARTIFICIAL PITCH AT BELVOIR

The Capital Projects Manager reported that the installation of the new pitch at Belvoir was under way. Work had started on 17 September 2007, and it was anticipated that it would be completed within nine weeks. It was hoped to arrange an opening ceremony on 8 January 2008 once the costs had been approved by the Central Services Committee. The IFA had provided promotional items to be presented to schoolchildren at the opening ceremony.

Following some further discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the Central Services Committee be requested to determine and approve costs for an opening ceremony of the artificial pitch at Belvoir on 8 January 2008.

LS/2007/125 : INSURANCE COMPANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ROBINSON CENTRE

The Technical Manager advised that the Council's Insurers had made several recommendations following an inspection of the Robinson Centre. A significant recommendation had been the replacement of the existing partially automatic fire detection system at a cost of approximately £15,000. The Insurers had requested compliance with their recommendation within 30 days. However, the Council had informed the Insurers that it would not be possible to comply with the deadline, as this work would be subject to tender.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised concerns that the Insurers had made these recommendations only after agreeing to provide insurance cover. Members also felt that an emergency Committee meeting should have been called immediately to discuss the replacement of the fire detection system. The Director of Leisure Services replied that, although the Council was complying with statutory requirements, the Insurers were at liberty to include additional requirements, and in order to maintain cover, the Council had to make any necessary changes. She added that the Insurer's requests had been discussed by the Management Team, and she suggested that the Director of Administration & Community Services enter into discussions with the Insurers regarding provision of adequate cover.

The Technical Manager referred to his supplementary report, which also listed the installation of remote monitoring of the fire alarm system. He sought Members' views whether this should be installed immediately or whether to wait until the new system had been installed. It was agreed that this should be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

Following some further discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That approval be granted to advertise for tenders for a new fire detection system for the Robinson Centre that met the Council's Insurer's requirements
- (b) That the Director of Administration & Community Services be asked to enter into discussion with the Council's Insurers regarding the provision of adequate cover.

LS/2007/126 : TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Director of Leisure Services took Members through the trading accounts. She reported that the actual net cost for August 2007 in the Robinson Centre was slightly higher than the budgeted net cost, which was due to reduced income and expenditure in that month. She further stated that the net cost at the Belvoir Activity Centre and Lough Moss were both under budget, and Officers were currently investigating marketing objectives.

Noted.

LS/2007/127 : WORKING TIME (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NI) 2007 – INCREASE IN ANNUAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENT FOR CASUAL WORKERS

The Director of Leisure Services provided Members with estimated increases in expenditure in respect of the additional leave entitlement for casual workers. She advised that the leisure centres would make every effort to absorb these increases among existing staff at each facility.

Noted.

LS/2007/128 : LOUGH MOSS WIND TURBINE

The General Manager of Leisure & Marketing tabled a detailed report and informed Members that he had met with representatives from the Department of Finance & Personnel regarding the problems encountered in respect of the erection of a wind turbine at Lough Moss and to seek a way forward. The Department had agreed that the Council could choose an alternative wind turbine if necessary. It further advised that, if the Council re-advertise for tenders and employ a consultant to manage the project until its completion and submission of the Post-Project Evaluation, this would demonstrate the Council's commitment to the project. If the Council agreed to this and submitted new whole project costs, drawn up by the consultant, the Department would be willing to support the Council's case with the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Industry, and there might be a possibility of raising an additional £20,000 to £30,000. Furthermore, the Department would seek to ringfence the Council's grant of £107,943 and carry it over to the 2008-2009 financial year. The General Manager of Leisure & Marketing hoped that the cost of employing a consultant to be less than the £12,000 tender threshold, which would expedite the process. Should it be more than this, it would still be cost-effective to employ a consultant, given the prospect of recouping additional funding.

Following some discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council appoint a consultant to estimate the cost of the project, draw up the wind turbine specification, advise on the tender process and selection,

project-manage the installation, monitor its progress for one year following installation and completion of the Post-Project Evaluation to the Department of Finance & Personnel

- (b) That Officers write to the Department of Finance & Personnel and, using the new estimate of the project obtained from the consultant, ask that the grant be carried over to the 2008-2009 financial year, and that consideration be given to receipt of additional grant funding
- (c) That, following confirmation that the grant can be carried over, Officers tender for and appoint a contractor to install and maintain the wind turbine for five years
- (d) That Officers, on advice from the consultant, make any necessary amendments to the planning application.

LS/2007/129 : EZE CONTRACT

The Director of Leisure Services advised that proceedings to lift the covenants in respect of the EZE contract were now underway, and she would keep Members informed of the progress.

Noted.

LS/2007/130 : STAFF INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Area Manager Leisure provided Members with a breakdown of discounts available to staff in all Council facilities, as requested at the September Committee meeting.

During the ensuing discussion, Councillor Hanvey proposed to approve the incentive scheme brought forward by Officers in recognition of hard work and commitment from staff. However, the consensus was that Members should not be included in the scheme.

Councillor J Beattie advised that the proposed incentive scheme should be referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for endorsement, as it affected all staff.

RESOLVED: That approval be granted for an incentive scheme for staff only, to be implemented in Lough Moss, Robinson Centre and Belvoir Activity Centre, subject to consultation with HR and approval from the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

LS/2007/131 : ASTRO PITCH AT LOUGH MOSS

Councillor Long stated, for the benefit of those Members who had not been present, that a site visit had taken place to artificial pitches at Olympia LC and Campbell College. The Area Manager Leisure then supplied details of the various pitches available:

- 3G or 'Rubber Crumb' pitch (Olympia LC or Ashfield Boys' School)
- Sand-based pitch (Lough Moss)
- Sand-dressed pitch (Campbell College)

During the ensuing discussion, Members considered the various options, including the provision of a 3G (3rd generation pitch). The Area Manager Leisure stated that there was a big demand for football in the Borough, which the current grass pitches could not meet, and there were not enough artificial pitches available to meet the shortfall in provision. He added that, although the initial cost of a 3G pitch would be high, the pitch could be used virtually 24 hours a day, although some allowance would be required for regular maintenance. Councillor Duncan felt that, besides football, other types of sport needed to be considered, too.

Councillor Hanvey suggested that the Council could investigate whether there was a possibility of a partnership with a supplier of pitches.

The Director of Leisure Services sought Members' views regarding the preparation of a business case in respect of the various types of artificial pitch. Partnership options could then also be considered.

Following some further discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That Officers prepare a business case in respect of the various types of artificial pitch and present this at a future Committee meeting.

LS/2007/132 : PROVISION FOR REPAIRS TO EXISTING PITCH AT LOUGH MOSS

The Director of Leisure Services advised that, although options for a new pitch were being considered, there was a possibility that the existing pitch might require some repairs, therefore she sought approval to include the sum of £800 in the Estimates for 2008-2009 should the need arise.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to grant approval for the inclusion of the sum of £800 in the Estimates for 2008-2009 to cover remedial work that might be required to the existing astro pitch at Lough Moss.

LS/2007/133 : LETTER FROM IFA

The Director of Leisure Services informed Members that the IFA had confirmed that they did not expect the Council to enter into partnership agreements with any football clubs wishing to avail of partial funding. The letter had been intended to advise the Council that there was a possibility that interested clubs might approach the Council requesting assistance to make up the shortfall between grants available and the actual cost of any project.

Noted.

LS/2007/134 : BELVOIR PITCH PRICING STRUCTURE

The Area Manager Leisure tabled a price structure for the new pitch at Belvoir for Members' consideration. He advised that these prices could be reviewed in February 2008 for implementation in April 2008. Furthermore, for comparison, he had included price structures from various other centres.

RECOMMENDED CHARGES	OFF PEAK	PEAK	SCHOOLS	SPORTS DEVELOPMENT/GRASS ROOTS PROGRAMME	LIGHTS
1 Hour Pitch Hire BAC	£14.00	£19.00	£12.00**	£10.00 off peak £14.00 peak	£7.00
½ Hour Pitch Hire	£8.00	£10.00	£7.00**	£6.00 off peak £8.00	£3.50
COMPARISONS					
Main Hall at Belvoir 1 Hour	£19.50	£24.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Main Hall at Belvoir ½ Hour	£11.50	£13.50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lisburn 1 Hour Hire	£10.00	£10.00	Free	Free	£3.00
Larne 1 Hour Hire	£10.00	£10.00	Free	Free	£2.00
Cregagh 1 Hour Hire	£13.80	£18.90	£13.80	N/A	£6.90
Cregagh ½ Hour Hire	£6.90	£9.45	£6.90	N/A	£3.45

** School rate applicable Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm and only available to school-organised events that have a school supervisor present.

The Area Manager Leisure stated that the pitches at Cregagh, Larne and Lisburn were larger in size than the one at Belvoir. The main hall at Belvoir was similar in size to the new pitch.

Following some discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to grant approval for the price structure as outlined above.

LS/2007/135 : MISPLACED LODGEMENT AT LOUGH MOSS

The Director of Leisure Services advised that a Finance Clerk at the Lough Moss Centre had discovered that a lodgement of £337.50, which had consisted of £135 in notes and £202.50 in cheques, had not been cleared by the bank. The Council's auditor had

subsequently investigated the incident, and the Director of Leisure Services confirmed that all accepted procedures had been followed by Lough Moss staff.

Management had taken this matter seriously, and as an immediate step to improve control, all bags were now scanned by Securicor instead of the main outer bags only. The PSNI had also been informed.

Furthermore, the Director of Leisure Services stated that a lodgement collected on 19 July 2007 had been logged in at the bank on two separate occasions, 20 and 23 July 2007, which was of concern to the Council.

The Council's Finance Department had discussed the missing lodgement with the bank, and the bank had been made aware of the Council's procedures regarding collection by Securicor. The Director of Finance also intended to raise this matter at the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.

Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LS/2007/136 : BEQUEST OF MONEY

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the sum of £100 had been bequeathed to the Council by a lady who had recently passed away, and the Director sought Members' views whether to use the money to plant a tree and present a plaque in the lady's memory.

RESOLVED: That approval be granted to arrange a tree-planting ceremony and to present a plaque in memory of a resident who had passed away and bequeathed the sum of £100 to the Council.

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

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE