

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, 1 November 2007, at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor M Long
(in the chair)

ALDERMEN: J Norris MBE
Mrs A M Beattie
J Beattie
Ms J Bunting
D Drysdale
C Hall
B Hanvey

IN ATTENDANCE: General Manager Leisure & Marketing, Area Manager Leisure, Business Manager, and Assistant Members' Services Officer

APOLOGIES: An apology was received on behalf of Councillors Chambers and Duncan

TABLED : MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2007(copy previously circulated)

MATTERS ARISING

LS/2007/137 : ROBINSON CENTRE – DDA WORKS (Minute No. LS/2007/123 – Resolution (b) refers)

Councillor Long reminded Members that the above Minute had been referred back to the Committee by Council for further consideration.

Councillor Beattie referred to the content of Minute No. LS/2007/123 – Resolution (b) and he expressed the view that he did not feel that it was necessary to provide the Committee with executive powers for approval of the tenders.

Councillor Long sought clarification that it was still in order for Officers to place the advertisement for the tenders.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That Officers be authorised to tender for DDA Works at the Robinson Centre but the Committee would not be granted executive powers for approval of the tenders.

LS/2007/138 : INSURANCE COMPANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ROBINSON CENTRE (Minute No. LS/2007/125 refers)

The Area Manager referred to the issue of the extension of the alarm system which had been considered at the last Committee meeting. He advised that after additional scrutiny of the insurance report and confirmation from the insurers, the extension of the system was deemed a category D matter and not category A as previously indicated. He reported that as a category D issue, it was a recommendation rather than a requirement. He continued by stating that the installation of an automatic signalling system was, however, categorised as C and therefore a requirement under the terms and conditions of the policy.

He advised that the cost of this installation would be investigated further, and approval sought at the December Committee meeting. He outlined that as a category C requirement there was an allowance of 4 months to complete the work. He further advised that the policy had been checked and there was a clause which provided the insurer with the right to conduct interim inspections of the facilities to identify such work as required for the lifetime of the policy.

Councillor Hanvey expressed the view that it concerned him that after agreeing to provide insurance cover, the company had the right to visit the leisure facilities periodically and request work to be carried out to comply with the policy. He added that any potential costs in this respect was an issue that the Estimates Working Group would have to bear in mind.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) Officers be authorised to obtain costings for the installation of an automatic signalling system at the Robinson Centre for consideration at the next Committee meeting
- (b) the Estimates Working Group be asked to bear in mind potential costs that may arise from the insurance company's periodic inspections of the leisure centres

LS/2007/139 : LOUGH MOSS WIND TURBINE (Minute No. LS/2007/128 – Resolution (a) refers)

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing outlined that, as reported at the last Committee meeting, it was hoped that the cost of employing a consultant to manage the above project would be less than £12,000.00, which was the public tender threshold. He advised Members of the detail of three quotations which had been received which were all over £12,000.00, and one received earlier in the day from White, Young & Green in the sum of £11,200.00.

He reported that the Council's M&E Engineer had perused all quotations received, and as it was his view that White, Young & Green was a reputable company and capable of carrying out the work, it was being recommended that they be awarded the contract.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that the quotation from White, Young & Green Consultants in the sum of £11,200.00 be accepted in relation to the Wind Turbine Project at the Lough Moss Centre.

LS/2007/140 : PROVISION FOR REPAIRS TO EXISTING PITCH AT LOUGH MOSS (Minute No. LS/2007/132 refers)

The Area Manager Leisure circulated for Members' information a supplementary report in relation to the above. He advised Members that the pitch at Lough Moss continued to deteriorate and that a number of rips had occurred over the past week as a result of expansion and contraction of the playing surface. He added that this was largely due to unseasonal dry weather, heavy usage and age of the pitch. He explained that the pitch had been laid approximately ten years ago, and had a life expectancy of 10 to 15 years, depending on the maintenance programme.

He advised that emergency repairs had to be carried out, and an invoice was awaited for a sum of between £800.00 and £1,000.00. He added that as no provision had been made in this financial year for pitch repairs, this may result in an overspend in the buildings maintenance budget. He recommended that a similar amount be included in the 2008/2009 estimates.

Councillor Bunting outlined that, given that part of the problem had been unseasonal dry weather, she asked if the pitch could be watered regularly to avoid ongoing maintenance costs.

The Area Manager Leisure advised that it was quite a large area to water and that he was trying to ascertain the most practical way of performing this function.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to

- (a) grant retrospective approval for the costs incurred in relation to emergency repairs carried out at the pitch at Lough Moss, estimated to be in the region of £800.00 to £1,000.00
- (b) agree that a sum of £800.00 be included in the Leisure Services' estimates for 2008/2009 to carry out pitch repairs at Lough Moss

LS/2007/141 : MISPLACED LODGEMENT AT LOUGH MOSS (Minute No. LS/2007/135 refers)

Following a query from Councillor Drysdale, the Area Manager advised that an update on the above matter would be provided at the December Committee meeting.

Noted.

**REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES
(copy previously circulated)**

LS/2007/142 : TRADING ACCOUNTS FOR THE LOUGH MOSS, BELVOIR AND ROBINSON CENTRES

The Business Manager took Members through the detail in relation to the trading accounts for the above three Leisure Centres. She informed Members that the net cost across the Leisure Centres to the end of period 6 was above that estimated. She advised that this had been due to an actual performance in income of some 42% behind budget, but she highlighted that there was a corresponding reduction in expenditure of 34%.

The Business Manager also drew Members' attention to potential overspends in relation to the provision of electricity and gas within both the Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres.

Noted.

LS/2007/143 : SHOKK PRESENTATION

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing asked Members to note that the presentation by Shokk had been deferred to the December Committee meeting.

Noted.

LS/2007/144 : MULTI SKILLS PROGRAMME

The Area Manager referred Members to a report from the Sports Development Officer in relation to the South East Seals Multi Skills Club currently operating at the Lough Moss, Belvoir and Tullycarnet Centres. He explained the aims and objectives of the programme and advised that the Big Lottery funding was due to finish in June 2008. He asked Members to consider supporting the project once the Lottery funding had ended. He advised that it was anticipated that £8,500.00 would be required to support the project in all three centres in the 2008/2009 financial year based on facility hire, coaching costs, promotion and prizes.

He continued by stating that if the three schemes were fully subscribed there was a potential income of £6,000.00.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That

- (a) a sum of £8,500.00 be provided in the 2008/2009 estimates for the Multi Skills Projects operating at the Lough Moss, Belvoir and Robinson Centres

- (b) a review of the project be carried out, and reported back to the Committee for Members to consider its inclusion in the estimates process in the 2009/2010 financial year

LS/2007/145 : SPORT DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Area Manager Leisure sought approval to include in next year's estimates a figure of £14,000.00 for the employment of a work placement student to assist the Sport Development Officer (SDO). He advised that the SDO was currently the Council's only recognised Child Protection Officer, and in addition to formulating a Sports Development Strategy and Child Protection Policy, she was also responsible for delivering Child Protection training to all relevant Council staff. He added that the SDO was becoming heavily involved in the Child Protection element of her workload, and the employment of a student would relieve some of the pressure on other aspects of her work. He advised that whilst tentative provision existed within the draft estimates, he felt that it was important that Members approve this approach to what was becoming a burgeoning work load.

Following a query from Councillor Bunting in relation to the terms of the employment, the Area Manager Leisure advised that the post would be based on a one year full time placement.

Councillor Hanvey advised that he and two Officers had attended a conference last year and the burden on all Councils in relation to Child Protection issues had been clearly spelled out.

Councillor Mrs Beattie stated that she understood that last year the Sports Development Officer was to progress a staff training programme but the Committee had never received an update on this issue. She asked that a report be tabled at the next Committee meeting.

The Area Manager Leisure advised that the Sports Development Officer was the only staff member qualified to deliver training in child protection issues. He reported that the Human Resources Section was currently comparing the cost of outside training as opposed to in-house, whilst bearing in mind consistency of delivery content.

He further advised that a Working Group had been established to review the Council's Child Protection policy, and the Director of Leisure Services was currently preparing the new policy which would be tabled for Members' approval in due course.

Councillor Long suggested that, in the meantime, the costs involved in the recruitment of a student be referred to the Estimates Working Group.

Councillor Bunting proposed that should the Estimates Working Group approve this funding, the post should be subject to a review being carried out, and in the event that Officers bring forward a similar request in 2009/2010, the Committee would be in a position to evaluate the benefits to the Council of the student placement post.

Councillor Hanvey seconded the proposal.

Given that the student would be assisting the SDO in her other duties to allow her to be more involved in the child protection issues, Members were of the view that other staff needed to be trained as soon as possible.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that it would ease the SDO's burden if Community Services and Technical Services had staff trained in child protection issues.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the costs of £14,000.00 for the recruitment of a Sports Development student on a one year placement to assist the Sports Development Officer be included in the 2008/2009 estimates, with the proviso that an evaluation be carried out towards the end of the year on the benefits to the Council of the post
- (b) a report on the comparative costs involved in the delivery of staff training on child protection issues, in terms of outside and in-house training be tabled at the next Committee meeting
- (c) a report on the staff training programme which had previously been carried out by the Sports Development Officer on child protection issues be tabled at the next Committee meeting

LS/2007/146 : BUSINESS CASE FOR CASUALS VERSUS CONTRACTED COACHING RATES

The Area Manager Leisure advised Members that Officers were currently working on a business case for the potential creation of additional contracted coaching posts in a number of key service provision areas. He outlined that the new coaching rates would not be implemented until a report on the matter, including Officer recommendations was considered by the Committee.

Noted.

LS/2007/147 : ASTRO PITCH AT LOUGH MOSS

The Area Manager advised that Officers were awaiting estimated costs for the installation of a new pitch at Lough Moss, with the options of sand dressed, sand filled/based and 3rd generation (rubber crumb) being explored.

He advised that a full report and business case on the estimated costs would be tabled at a future meeting of the Committee for Members' consideration.

Noted.

2007/148 : EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR PITCH PROVISION AT LOUGH MOSS AND BILLY NEILL CENTRES

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that he and the Area Manager had met with the Client Manager and Capital Projects Officer with regard to preparing an expressions of interest document in relation to the above. He advised that the expressions of interest would include the following:

- the provision of a replacement pitch at Lough Moss
- explore the possible opportunities for partnerships with the private sector in providing a soft play area, a 3G five a side kick about and possible full size 3G pitch at both the Lough Moss and Billy Neill Centres

Noted.

2007/149 : ROBINSON CENTRE RE-DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Councillor Long advised that at the October Council meeting, the membership of the Robinson Centre Re-development Working Group had been agreed, but two of its Members were not Members of the Leisure Services Committee. He sought the Committee's views as to whether Members representing other areas of the Borough should be included in the Working Group.

Following discussion, Members were of the view that at this point in time, the Working Group membership would remain as agreed at the Council meeting. If at a later stage it was deemed necessary to extend the membership, the matter would be referred back to the Committee.

Members considered and agreed the Terms of Reference as follows:

- refurbish the existing centre
- knock down and re-build on the existing site
- re-build on an alternative site
- engage with Belfast City Council on a joint venture

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the Members of the Robinson Centre Re-development Working Group to report back to the Committee if they deem it necessary to extend the membership to include Elected Representatives from other areas of the Borough
- (b) the Robinson Centre Re-development Working Group's Terms of Reference would be, as follows:
 - (i) refurbish the existing centre
 - (ii) knock down and re-build on the existing site
 - (iii) re-build on an alternative site
 - (iv) engage with Belfast City Council on a joint venture

LS/2007/150 : OUTSTANDING INVOICE FOR CAPITAL WORKS AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE

The Area Manager Leisure advised Members of an outstanding invoice for £9,482.25 relating to capital works carried out at the Robinson Centre in 2001. He outlined that the Architects had approved a certificate of completion, but as there had been a dispute in relation to some of the finishes and although remedial work had been undertaken by the contractor, there remained some concerns.

He reported that the Architects had employed an independent company to assess these concerns which were largely damp related problems affecting the cosmetic appearance of some areas of the building. He added that the findings indicated that there were high levels of moisture and humidity which had caused damage to the wall surfaces but that the work carried out by McCues had been completed to the contract specification. He added that it was the company's view that the existing plaster work was not correctly specified and had absorbed moisture. He outlined that, before bringing the invoice to Committee for approval of payment, further investigations were being undertaken.

Noted.

LS/2007/151 : LETTER FROM PSNI RE: FALSE ALARM ACTIVATIONS AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE

The Area Manager reported that a letter had recently been received from the Crime Prevention Branch of the PSNI advising that due to 3 false alarms in a 12 month period, it was reducing its alarm activation response to level 3.

The Area Manager advised that he had written to the PSNI appealing this decision on the grounds that there were mitigating circumstances, in that, no PSNI response had been evidenced in two of the activations when Council staff had been on site. He reported that the appeal, however, had been rejected and the response would not be reinstated until the set criteria had been met.

He outlined that the Council's insurers had been notified, and he advised that the withdrawal would not impact on the PSNI's response to the activation of the personal attack alarms situated within key areas of the complex.

Councillor Bunting asked that, in future, Officers report these incidents to the Committee.

The Area Manager outlined that there were false alarms at all leisure type facilities, and he suggested that confirmed activations be reported to the Committee.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That, in future, the Committee be advised of every confirmed intruder alarm activation at the Lough Moss, Belvoir and Robinson Centres.

LS/2007/152 : ULSTER WOMEN'S HOCKEY UNION – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing referred Members to correspondence from the above organisation seeking financial support towards the Girls' Under 18 Inter-provincial Tournament being held in Shaw's Bridge Sports Association Grounds on 10th and 11th November.

He advised that the request had also been referred to the Castlereagh Sports Development Association, but it did not fall within the agreed criteria. He added that the request had also been considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, and it had been agreed in principle to support the event, with a recommendation that funding would be met out of the Support for Sporting Events budget. He outlined that there was currently a sum of £3,000.00 in this budget, with commitment already anticipated for the Tour of the North event at Easter.

Following a query from Councillor Bunting, Councillor J Beattie advised that the Director of Finance had considered the Council's policy and was of the view that the project met the required criteria.

Members considered the amount normally set aside for the Tour of the North, and it was agreed to provide a financial contribution of £500.00 to the Ulster Women's Hockey Union, which would leave an amount remaining in the budget for any further funding requests in this financial year.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that a financial contribution of £500.00 from the Support for Sporting Events budget be provided to the Ulster Women's Hockey Union towards the Girls' Under 18 Inter-provincial Tournament being held in Shaw's Bridge Sports Association Grounds on 10th and 11th November.

LS/2007/153 : BEVOIR PLAYERS ANNUAL ARTS PROGRAMME

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised Members that Mr Richard Mills from Belvoir Players was seeking sponsorship towards the costs involved in the production of the back page of the Annual Festival programme which would include an advertisement for all the Council's leisure facilities. He outlined that Castlereagh Leisure & Community Services and the Finance & Leisure Services Committees had sponsored the back page for the past eight years.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that a financial contribution of £300.00 be provided to Belvoir Players to cover the costs involved in the production of the back page of their Annual Arts Programme.

LS/2007/154 : SALTO GYMNASTICS SUCCESS AT SPECIAL OLYMPIC GAMES IN SHANGHAI

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing reported that the Salto Gymnastics Club had won fourteen medals for Team Ireland at the World Special Olympic Games in Shanghai. He advised that Castlereagh gymnast Una McGarry was one of the athletes from Salto who had contributed to the medal table by winning 2 gold and 2 bronze medals in the rhythmic gymnastics section. He added that Una successfully overcame stiff competition from the world's best to achieve four podium positions in her first international competition.

He asked Members if they wished to consider an appropriate way to recognise the success of the Castlereagh based club.

Councillor Hanvey outlined that he was pleased that the Council had provided the equipment and use of leisure centre facilities for the club to train in and to achieve such success.

Councillor Long suggested that the Central Services Committee or the Mayor consider an appropriate way to celebrate the club's success.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that the event would only involve approximately six young people and possibly their parents/guardians/coaches.

Given the relatively small numbers involved, Members felt that it may be appropriate for the Mayor to provide refreshments in the Parlour and present each of the young people with a small gift.

Councillor Bunting stated that the costs of the event should be met out of an appropriate Leisure Services budget.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the General Manager Leisure & Marketing liaise with the Mayor in order to ascertain if she wished to host a small reception in the Parlour for approximately six members of the Salta Gymnastics Club to recognise their achievements at the World Special Olympic Games in Shanghai.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LS/2007/155 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS & LEISURE – BRIEFING SESSION ON THE PARALYMPICS BY LORD COE IN LISBURN CIVIC CENTRE ON 8 NOVEMBER 2007

Councillor Long advised that the Director of Leisure Services and the General Manager Leisure & Marketing were unable to attend the above event, and he asked if any Member wished to attend, they should contact the General Manager.

Noted.

LS/2007/156 : PROPOSED NEW PLAYGROUND AT BELVOIR

Councillor J Beattie advised that he was on the Board of Governors of Belvoir Primary School, and he understood that the new playground was being built at the back of the school, and within school grounds.

The Area Manager Leisure advised that this was an issue for the Technical & Environmental Services Committee.

Noted.

At this point, the Assistant Members' Services Officer left the meeting.

STAFF IN COMMITTEE

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE