

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 Tuesday 8 April 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor M Long
(in the chair)

ALDERMEN: J Norris MBE

COUNCILLORS: Mrs A Beattie (from 7.47 p.m.)
C Hall
B Hanvey

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors J Beattie, D Drysdale, Mrs S Duncan and Mrs V McCoy

TABLED : MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2008 (copy previously circulated)

MATTERS ARISING

LS/2008/65 : INCIDENT AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE (Minute No. LS/2008/52 refers)

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that, at the Council meeting held on 27 March 2008, the above Minute had been referred back to the Committee. She added that she understood that Councillor Robinson had raised this issue with a view to Officers meeting with the gentleman involved to explain the Council's policy on dealing with abusive behaviour towards staff and to address any queries he may have.

Councillor Hanvey outlined that, at the Council meeting, clarification had also been sought in relation to Human Rights and Child Protection issues.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that Officers had approached the gentleman at the centre inviting him to discuss the incident with them but he had declined. She added that Officers had also written to him, but to date no response had been received. She added that each incident of abuse towards staff was dealt with on its merit. She advised that, in respect of this particular

incident, the children involved had not been barred but because of his abusive manner, the father had.

The Director explained that, in line with Child Protection Legislation, the relevant staffing ratios were implemented within the Robinson Centre, resulting in more than one staff member supervising the various facilities. She added that, given this and the fact that the gentleman had been given a number of opportunities to discuss this incident with Officers, she was of the view that no child protection or human rights issues had been breached.

She outlined that she would write again to the gentleman inviting him to meet with Officers in order to explain the Council's policy in relation to abusive behaviour towards staff and to address any queries he may have.

The Director of Leisure Services indicated that, in the absence of any additional evidence, the decision to bar the gentleman may have to stand.

Members expressed their support for any action the Director may take.

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the Director of Leisure Services write to the gentleman involved in an incident at the Robinson Centre inviting him to meet with Officers in order to explain to him the Council's policy in relation to dealing with abusive behaviour and to address any queries he may have. The gentleman also be advised that, when considering any offence, the Council would give due regard to the behavioural code, which in turn had regard to human rights and child protection legislation.
- (b) in the absence of any additional evidence, as determined by the Director of Leisure Services, the decision to bar the gentleman would stand

LS/2008/66 : OVERSPEND IN GAS COSTS AT LOUGH MOSS

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing circulated for Members' information a graph detailing gas consumption at the Lough Moss Centre over the past three years.

He further advised that during 2005/2006, the Council had a fixed price contract with Phoenix Gas, but this type of contract was no longer available and gas consumption was now based on a daily tariff. He added that although gas consumption had decreased at the centre, increased gas prices had resulted in the overspend.

The General Manager advised that provision for increased costs had been made in this year's estimates, but this may still not be adequate if further price increases were levied.

Noted.

LS/2008/67 : ROBINSON CENTRE LEARNER POOL (Minute No. LS/2008/51 refers)

The Area Manager reported that the repairs to the above had now been completed and the temperature in the learner pool was back to normal.

Noted.

LS/2008/68 : ROBINSON CENTRE WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2008

The Director of Leisure Services reported that at the above meeting it had been resolved that an economic appraisal be carried out in relation to the Robinson Centre site. She added that, given the Minister's announcement in relation to RPA that Castlereagh and Lisburn would form a new Council District and the fact that a determination had not as yet been forthcoming from the Boundary Commission, she felt that it may be prudent for the Minutes to be referred back to the Working Group for further consideration. With regard to the Boundaries Commission, she added that there was a possibility that Montgomery Road could come under the Belfast City Council area.

The Director advised that while the working group reported directly to council, she was keeping the committee informed as ultimately this was a leisure facility, for which she would normally bring to the leisure services committee. The Director further advised that the minutes from the last meeting of the working group would be taken forward to the next meeting of full council, but she would be recommending to the chair of the group, Cllr Walker, that the minutes be referred back to the working group for further consideration given the announcement regarding RPA.

Noted.

Councillor Mrs Beattie arrived to the meeting at 7.47 p.m.

**REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER LEISURE & MARKETING/AREA
MANAGER LEISURE
(copy previously circulated)**

LS/2008/69 : TOUR OF THE NORTH

The Area Manager advised Members that the Tour of the North stage hosted by Castlereagh had taken place on Easter Monday, and the organisers had been very complimentary for the part the Council had played in helping to make this a successful event.

Noted.

LS/2008/70 : PSNI RESPONSE TO ALARM ACTIVATIONS

The Area Manager reported that he had now received confirmation from the PSNI that its response to alarm activations at the Robinson Centre had been reinstated. He added that the PSNI had advised that the response would, however, be determined by its priorities at any particular time.

Following a query from Councillor Hanvey in relation to insurance cover, the Area Manager explained that when the PSNI response had been withdrawn, he had advised the Council's insurers but they had not given any indication that there would be any insurance implications over that period.

Noted.

LS/2008/71 : FITNESS SUITE PRICE AT BELVOIR

The Area Manager advised Members that in comparison to the Lough Moss and Robinson Centres, the figures for the fitness suite at Belvoir had not been as impressive. He outlined that this may be partly due to the fact that there were less facilities available at Belvoir and also its close proximity to the LA Fitness facility at Shaws Bridge.

He indicated that, in an effort to stimulate and attract demand, it was being recommended that a fee of £15.00 per month be levied at the Belvoir facility only, and that customers who avail of this price would be restricted to the use of the facilities at Belvoir. He added that customers who continued to pay the normal membership fee would be permitted to use the facilities at all three leisure sites. He outlined that it was envisaged that this offer should be put in place until the end of March 2009, when it could be reviewed.

Councillor Hanvey sought clarification as to whether a reduced rate at Belvoir would have an adverse affect on membership figures at the other two Leisure Centres.

The Area Manager advised that there was a wider range of facilities available at the Lough Moss and Robinson Centres as compared with those available at Belvoir Activity Centre.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that a fee of £15.00 per month be levied for use of fitness facilities at Belvoir Activity Centre, and customers who avail of this reduced rate would be restricted to use of facilities at the Belvoir Centre only. The charge to be reviewed again in March 2009.

LS/2008/72 : BEHAVIOURAL CODE

The Area Manager outlined that, following discussion at the last Committee meeting in relation to abuse directed towards staff by members of the public, it had been resolved that a sign be drawn up highlighting Leisure Services' Policy in relation to such behaviour. He added that at the Council meeting held on 27 March 2008, the Minute relating to this matter (LS/2008/52) had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration. He circulated for Members' consideration the suggested wording of the sign, together with a copy of the draft Behavioural Code detailing the various sanctions to be imposed, in respect of the following:

1. physical attack on staff or other members of the public
2. threat of physical attack on staff or other members of the public
3. threat of physical attack on Council property/buildings
4. verbal abuse of staff and members of the public
5. false accusations that relate to child protection issues
6. vandalism
7. telephone abuse
8. racial abuse
9. unauthorised use of facilities – failure to pay
10. general bad language

Councillor Long outlined that, in light of concerns expressed at the last Council meeting in relation to Human Rights and Child Protection Legislation, he asked if reference could be made to this within the policy.

He also suggested that customers should be advised that an investigation would be carried out before sanctions were imposed.

The Director of Leisure Services referred to the penultimate paragraph of the Code and suggested that a sentence be incorporated to read "In consideration of any offences, due regard would be given to Human Rights and Child Protection Legislation".

At the suggestion of Councillor Long, it was agreed that the following wording also be incorporated

"Following the outcome of an investigation by the Leisure Management Team, appropriate sanctions commensurate with the offences would be imposed.'

Members sought clarification as to whether the Behavioural Code would also be implemented at the Ice Bowl.

The General Manager outlined that the matter would have to be referred to the Leisure Park Board for consideration.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that she would also raise the matter at the next Management Team meeting, in terms of the Leisure Park, Golf Club and community facilities.

Subject to the inclusion of the two sentences as outlined above, Members expressed their approval of the sign and the content of the Code.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the Council be recommended to approve the Behavioural Code to be implemented at the Robinson, Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres, subject to two sentences being incorporated to read “Following the outcome of an investigation by the Leisure Management Team, appropriate sanctions commensurate with the offences would be imposed.” and “In consideration of any offence, due regard would be given to Human Rights and Child Protection Legislation”.
- (b) the Director of Leisure Services raise the issue of the Behavioural Code at the next Management Team, with a view to arranging for the matter to be considered at the appropriate Committee/Board meetings, in terms of the Ice Bowl, Golf Club and Community facilities

LS/2008/73 : EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR PLAYING SURFACES AT LOUGH MOSS AND BILLY NEILL

The Area Manager reported that an advertisement had been placed in the Belfast Telegraph seeking expressions of interest in relation to the above on an income-sharing basis or straight replacement of the existing facility.

He outlined that the options include the following:

Lough Moss:

- (i) Replacement of the existing synthetic pitch with either sand based, sand dressed or 3G pitches each with or without a shock pad. (Income share option and straight replacement option costs for each surface).
- (ii) New five-a-side pitch – 3G or similar with floodlights.
- (iii) New soft play area either as stand alone building or use of existing space within the centre.

Billy Neill:

- (i) Construction of a new full size pitch, fencing, floodlights with a 3G synthetic surface compatible to soccer.
- (ii) New five-a-side pitches – 3G or similar with fencing and floodlights.

He outlined that whilst more than 10 companies had responded, the information they had provided did not specifically address the options at either centre. He advised that, in relation to the options at Lough Moss, no detailed costings had been provided for a replacement of the existing pitch.

He further advised that the responses detailed the work that the various interested parties had undertaken elsewhere but there was nothing specific to the current set up at either Lough Moss or Billy Neill. He outlined that after consulting with Technical Officers from both Departments, it was felt that there would be merit in establishing a joint working group made up of Officers and Elected Representatives from the two relevant Committees to discuss the options further. He added that this would provide the opportunity to liaise further with the interested companies and to provide them with specific details in relation to the Council's expectations at both of these facilities.

He continued by stating that this would allow the committees to agree on the possible locations of the potential new or replacement playing surfaces, and whether from a business perspective, Lough Moss would be the most practical site for either a new 3G full size pitch and/or a "caged" 5 a side block of pitches. He advised that one of the options would be to use the existing astro pitch as a location to the detriment of hockey provision or considering replacing the existing pitch and adding additional artificial surfaces. He added that the options for the development of the Billy Neill site would also need to be considered in the process.

He advised that a similar request for a joint working group would be tabled at the Technical & Environmental Services Committee for consideration.

Following discussion in relation to the membership of the joint working group, it was agreed that this should comprise the Chairs of the Leisure Services, Technical & Environmental Services and the Finance & General Purposes Committees plus one Member from the UUP, DUP, Alliance, SDLP.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree

- (a) to the formation of a Technical/Leisure Services Working Group to discuss the options in relation to playing surfaces at both the Lough Moss and Billy Neill Centres

- (b) the Working Group membership to include the Chairs of the Leisure Services, Technical & Environmental Services and the Finance & General Purposes Committees, plus one Member from the UUP, DUP, SDLP and the Alliance Party
- (c) Members' Services staff to contact the Party Whips to obtain the name of the Member from each of the political parties who sit on either the Technical & Environmental Services or the Leisure Services Committees

LS/2008/74 : REPORT ON LEISURE CENTRES COCA COLA PROMOTIONAL EXPENDITURE 2007 AND BUDGET FOR 2008 (copy previously circulated)

The General Manager referred to his report detailing the actual promotional spend on uniforms for 2007 at the three leisure centres. He explained that the budget was calculated on the volume of the litres purchased by each facility, and with prior agreement by Coca Cola, the available spend could be used on branded promotional products such as uniforms and sponsorship for agreed events.

He added that the sales had previously been calculated during the period 1 September to end of August and an amount paid to Council in the following January of each year. He advised that following a meeting with Coca Cola, they had agreed to revise its policy and the monies would now be paid on a quarterly basis.

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that this arrangement would allow for better accountability.

Noted.

LS/2008/75 : PROVISIONAL TRADING FIGURES FOR THE LOUGH MOSS, ROBINSON AND BELVOIR CENTRES FOR THE PERIOD MARCH 2007 TO END FEBRUARY 2008

The General Manager took Members through the detail in respect of the above.

Councillor Long outlined that the figures were more encouraging than in previous months at all three leisure centres.

Noted.

LS/2008/76 : LEISURE SERVICES ESTIMATES : 2008 & 2009

The Director of Leisure Services took Members through the detail of the above, and she asked Members to note that the largest variance was in respect of the

Robinson Centre, in terms of fixed plant and equipment. She explained that work amounting to £60,000.00 had been carried out in 2007/2008 which had not been budgeted for and the 2008/2009 budget had taken account of this.

She advised that the overall variance for the three leisure centres amounted to almost £90,000.00.

Noted.

LS/2008/77 : QUOTATIONS FOR ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AT THE LOUGH MOSS CENTRE

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing reported that quotations had been obtained for electricity supply at the Lough Moss Centre, as follows:

Energia	£47,824.43
Airtricity	£45,781.79

He outlined that the quotations submitted by Energia for electricity supply at other Council facilities had been the lowest, and that Lough Moss was the only centre where it had submitted a higher quotation.

Following a query from Councillor Mrs Beattie, the General Manager advised that he was not aware of the reason for higher electricity costs at Lough Moss, but that he would investigate this and report back.

Councillor Hanvey outlined that quotations had been sought on the basis of a number of Council facilities in an attempt to achieve a better price, and he sought clarification as to whether this would be a shared saving across the three leisure centres.

The General Manager advised that consideration of the fact that electricity costs at the Lough Moss Centre was higher would be taken into account during the estimates process.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) the quotation from Energia be accepted for electricity supply at the Lough Moss Centre, at a cost of £47,824.43.
- (b) the General Manager Leisure & Marketing to ascertain why the quotation for electricity costs at the Lough Moss was higher than those of the other two leisure centres, and report back to the next Committee meeting.

LS/2008/78 : LOGO FOR LEISURE STATIONERY, LITERATURE AND SIGNAGE

The General Manager circulated for Members' consideration a draft copy of the Leisure Services logo as prepared by a graphic designer, to be used on Leisure stationery, literature and signage, but not for promotional items.

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that they were running short of the current stocks which dated back to when Leisure had initially fallen under the Community & Leisure Committee and then Finance & Leisure Services Committee.

Councillor Mrs Beattie stated that she was not impressed with the logo and felt that something needed to be drawn up that would attract attention and make it clear to the public that the logo related to Castlereagh Borough Council leisure facilities.

Discussion then ensued in relation to what other Councils were doing in relation to printing of stationery, etc leading up to RPA.

Councillor Hanvey asked if there was much point in making major changes when other Councils promoting similar services appeared to be using basic logos leading up to RPA.

Councillor Long outlined that given the urgent need to purchase Leisure stationery, he proposed that limited stocks be purchased at this stage and the matter be revisited next year.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to approve the Leisure logo to be used on stationery, literature and signage, and that limited stocks be purchased at this stage in order for the matter to be revisited next year.

LS/2008/79 : ROBINSON CENTRE CAFE

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing attached to his report the café trading figures in respect of the Robinson Centre showing that the restaurant had been operating at a loss over the past three years. He also circulated a report on the current staffing levels within the restaurant, opening hours, SWOT analysis and a number of options, as follows:

- (i) continue with current operations
- (ii) partial closure
- (iii) relocate to the ground floor

- (iv) franchise or progress expressions of interest for the café as it stands or following a refurbishment
- (v) closure

In relation to the option to close the café, the Director advised that the birthday party meal package would continue and would be organised by the casual catering staff.

Officers addressed Members' queries in relation to the various options, in terms of renovation work required in respect of a number of the options, staffing implications, etc.

Following a detailed discussion, Members were of the view that, given the ongoing financial losses associated with the restaurant, Option (v) should be pursued further, and that Officers table a report on the costings involved in the café closure, for consideration at next month's Committee meeting, to include:

- provision of shutters, etc to isolate the kitchen area
- staffing costs related to continued staff supervision of area – security of vending machines, etc
- additional CCTV cameras to monitor and record activity in the area
- redecoration of the area

The Director of Leisure Services outlined the detail in relation to two potential staff relocation opportunities within other leisure facilities.

Members agreed that the Area Manager liaise with the Human Resources Manager, with a view to advising the relevant staff that the Committee was currently pursuing the option of the Robinson Centre café closure and to discuss with them the staffing implications.

The General Manager Marketing & Leisure outlined that should the economic appraisal for the Robinson Centre site be progressed at some future date, the issue of the café could be revisited.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) the option to close the Robinson Centre café be pursued further and that Officers table a report on all the associated costs involved in the café closure for consideration at next month's Committee meeting
- (b) in the meantime, the Area Manager liaise with the Human Resources Manager, with a view to advising the café staff that the Committee was pursuing the option of the Robinson Centre café closure and to discuss with them the staffing implications

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Adopted by the Council this _____ day of
_____ 2008 with the exception of
Minute Nos. _____

MAYOR