

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 7 February 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor M Long
(in the chair)

ALDERMEN: J Norris MBE

COUNCILLORS: C Hall
B Hanvey
Mrs V McCoy
C Tosh

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors A Beattie, J Beattie, J Bunting, M Chambers, D Drysdale and S Duncan

TABLED : MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 JANUARY 2008 (copy previously circulated)

MATTERS ARISING

LS/2008/26 : MISPLACED LODGEMENT AT LOUGH MOSS (Minute No. LS/2008/05 refers)

Following a query from Councillor McCoy in relation to the above, the Director of Leisure Services advised that the bank had still not contacted her with a date to meet with the bank manager. She added that Officers would pursue the matter and report back.

Noted.

LS/2008/27 : FALSE ALARM ACTIVATIONS AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE (Minute No. LS/2008/09 refers)

Councillor McCoy asked for an update in respect of the above.

The Area Manager outlined that as reported at the last meeting, Diamond Systems had not as yet received confirmation from the PSNI as to whether the alarm activation response had been reinstated. He added that he would investigate the matter and report back to the next meeting.

Noted.

LS/2008/28: CORRESPONDENCE FROM COUNCILLOR DUNCAN (copy previously circulated)

The Director of Leisure Services referred Members to a copy of an email which had been forwarded to Councillor Duncan from Dawn Wilson. She outlined that Miss Wilson was hoping to organise a table quiz in Belvoir Activity Centre on Friday 14th March 2008 in support of several orphanages and feeding programmes in Kenya. She added that Miss Wilson was seeking support from the Council in the form of a reduced rate or free use of the room.

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members of the support previously provided by the Council.

Councillor Hall proposed that the Council offer similar support to that given last year, and this was seconded by Councillor Hanvey.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that Miss Dawn Wilson be offered the hire of a hall within Belvoir Activity Centre at a reduced rate and be provide with a package of complimentary tickets to various Council leisure facilities in support of a charity event being organised on 14 March 2008.

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

LS/2008/29 : TRADING ACCOUNTS FOR THE LOUGH MOSS, BELVOIR AND ROBINSON CENTRES UP TO DECEMBER 2007

The Business Manager presented the trading accounts for the above three centres. She advised that the main area of concern was the Robinson Centre where there had been a reduction of £65,500.00 on expected income. She advised that as reported at the last Committee meeting, there were a number of factors which had led to lower than expected income. She explained that the diving pool had been out of action for a number of months whilst replacement diving boards were being installed and the fact that the centre had benefited last year from the temporary closure of a number of Belfast City Council leisure facilities. She added that the re-opening of these centres had worked against the centre in this financial year.

Following discussion on the catering arrangements at the Robinson Centre, the Business Manager advised that a review was currently being carried out and detailed options would be tabled at a future Committee meeting.

The Area Manager advised that inclement weather during the summer and a particularly cold winter had affected customer numbers at all leisure centres.

The Business Manager indicated that the budgets set aside for electricity and gas for 2007/2008 had been insufficient resulting in potential overspends at all three facilities. She outlined that the estimates for 2008/2009 had been increased based on actual usage.

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that electricity and gas usage was scrutinised to ensure there was no inappropriate use.

The Business Manager then referred to the adverse variance of £2,700.00 for the month of December in relation to wages at Belvoir Activity Centre and explained that this was due to staff sickness, which would also have a further adverse impact on January's figures.

Noted.

LS/2008/30 : FOOTBALL PITCH AT BELVOIR ACTIVITY CENTRE

Following a query from Alderman Norris in relation to the size of the new pitch, the Area Manager explained that it was a 4-a-side pitch targeted mainly at children. He advised that the IFA had a policy to cancel football sessions if it was raining, and as a result quite a number of matches had to be cancelled at the last minute. He added that the booking forms and terms and conditions therein were currently being reviewed.

Noted.

LS/2008/31 : PURCHASE OF STAFF UNIFORMS FOR ROBINSON CENTRE STAFF

The Director of Leisure Services reported that any major spend in relation to the above would be met out of the 2008/2009 financial year. She outlined that as Members would be aware, monies received from Coca Cola were being used to supplement the uniform budget. She added that the General Manager was currently preparing a report on the overall Coke arrangement and that a summary report would be brought to the Committee, once completed.

Noted.

LS/2008/32 : POSSIBLE USE OF THE BILLY NEILL CENTRE BY EZE FITNESS

The Area Manager reported that he and the Business Support Manager for Operational Services had recently met with the Managing Director and Regional Manager for Eze Fitness to discuss the possibility of Eze Fitness expanding its operation into the Billy Neill Centre. He outlined that the Managing Director had indicated that whilst there was potential, the location and current footfall figures at the centre did not appear to be attractive enough to make a sound business case. He outlined that Officers had advised them that the Council was currently investigating options for increasing business levels via a number of projects, including the possible installation of artificial turf/3G pitches with floodlighting.

He stated that the Managing Director had indicated that subject to evidence there would be other projects undertaken that would compliment a fitness suite and assist in attracting business, he would have no hesitation in re-visiting the possibility of a fitness outlet at the centre.

Following a query from Alderman Norris in relation to funding opportunities, the Area Manager advised that the issue of funding may be addressed via the expressions of interest process.

Councillor Hanvey outlined that this was an issue that covered both the Leisure Services and the Technical & Environmental Services Committee. He asked if there was any merit in developing a business plan as part of BMAP analysis, in terms of the projected demographic profile of the area.

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that the Billy Neill Advisory Committee which the Area Manager and the Sports Development Officer sat on, was a group that worked together in order to promote the development of this facility.

Noted.

LS/2008/33 : SOLAR PANELS AT BELVOIR ACTIVITY CENTRE

The Area Manager outlined that a report had been received by the former Leisure Services Technical Manager in relation to the ingress of air into the domestic hot water system at the above centre which occasions resulted in water having to be run off to alleviate the problem. He added that the report recommended that an automatic air eliminator should be installed, together with a few other modifications.

He advised that the new Technical Manager was due to commence employment at the beginning of February and a meeting would be convened with DM Engineering NI Ltd to discuss the content of the report.

Noted.

LS/2008/34 : GRASS ROOTS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP – LETTER OF COMPLAINT

The Area Manager advised Members that the above event had taken place at the Civic Centre on 17 January 2008 which had been hosted by the IFA Grass Roots Officer and the Council's Sports Development Officer (SDO), with assistance from the South East Sports Development Officer. He added that although this had been a successful event, a letter of complaint had been received from one of the attendees who operated football coaching sessions on a commercial basis. He referred Members to a copy of the e mail correspondence in which the gentleman was complaining about the lack of support from Castlereagh and other Councils, as well as the IFA.

He advised that the SDO had previously assisted this gentleman with obtaining places on coaching education courses and had organised joint programmes for mini soccer at

Cregagh Community Centre. He added that the SDO continued to send him regular information on sports development programmes and initiatives.

The Area Manager outlined that the SDO was currently drawing up a response to the gentleman's letter.

Noted.

LS/2008/35 : LOCKER SUPPLIER

The Area Manager reported that the supplier of the lockers at the Lough Moss, Belvoir and Robinson Centres was currently in administration/receivership. He added that although the company had to date managed to continue to supply spares, he wished to bring to Members' attention a potential future serious situation.

Noted.

LS/2008/36 : WIND TURBINE AT LOUGH MOSS

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) had agreed to provide an additional £70,000.00 towards the above project, making a total grant of £177,000.00. She added that as Members would be aware the grant had been rolled over to the 2007/2008 financial year, and if there was not a further roll over into the 2008/2009 year, the DFP had agreed to provide the capital resource required up to a limit of £185,000.00, as detailed in the recent estimate of the project.

She asked the Committee to note that the cost of the wind analysis and consultants' fees were all incorporated into the estimate of £185,000.00. She advised that the analysis would commence shortly, with the project scheduled to be completed late 2008.

On behalf of the Committee, Councillor Long passed on his appreciation to Officers for the level of funding obtained for the project.

Noted.

Please note that at the February Council meeting, Minute No. LS/2008/37 below was referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

LS/2008/37 : ROBINSON CENTRE WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2008

The Director of Leisure Services reported that the above meeting had been inquorate, but in order to progress the matter, those Members present had asked that the matter be considered by the Leisure & Community Services Committee in order for any resolution to go before the February Council meeting. To facilitate consideration of the matter she referred Members to a copy of the report that had been prepared for the Working Group meeting, together with a copy of the notes of the discussion by those Members present.

She also tabled a report detailing financial information relevant to the Robinson Centre over recent years.

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that it had been recognised that there were many areas of work needing to be addressed within the Robinson Centre and the site, and it was also recognised that in the absence of any certainty as to how RPA would affect the Borough, it was difficult to identify a total solution for the site.

She reported that any significant level of capital spend at this facility was likely to be subject to approval at Ministerial level. She added that to this end it was felt that an Economic Appraisal would assist this formal consideration and explore all the options, including joint facility options with neighbouring councils.

Councillor Hanvey asked if a capital spend at this facility would have an impact on corporate projects such as the Leisure Park site.

Councillor Long outlined that an Economic Appraisal would also evaluate relocating to the Leisure Park site as a possible option.

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that an Economic Appraisal was currently being carried out for DIIB, and it may be the most appropriate time to include an Economic Appraisal for the Robinson Centre.

She advised that an Economic Appraisal would cost in the region of £24,000.00.

Councillor McCoy sought clarification as to whether there was adequate capital provision within the estimates.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that there was adequate provision within the 2008/2009 estimates.

Following further discussion, Councillor Long proposed that an Economic Appraisal be carried out in respect of the Robinson Centre, and this was seconded by Alderman Norris.

In order to assist Members attendance at Robinson Centre Working Group meetings, it was agreed that future meetings would be scheduled during the evening.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) an Economic Appraisal to Green Book standard be carried out in respect of the Robinson Centre at an approximate cost of £24,000.00
- (b) future meetings of the Robinson Centre Working Group be scheduled during the evening

LS/2008/38 : GRASS ROOTS FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT CENTRES PROGRAMME

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the above programme had been running for almost two years and was being extended for a further three years. She advised that financial provision had been made to support the programme in the 2008/2009 year, and subsequent financial provision would need to be made for the following two years.

She referred Members to a report prepared by the Sports Development Officer detailing how the programme was being implemented, the benefits it had brought to the Borough and income generated. She sought authorisation to sign the Heads of Agreement document and forward it to the IFA with immediate effect, a copy of which she attached to her report for Members' information.

The Director of Leisure Services asked Members to note that although Leisure Services facilitated the Grass Roots programme through the provision of staff, all the income generated on the hire of facilities went to the Technical & Environmental Services Department. She expressed concern that should there be a shortfall in income at some time in the future whether Technical & Environmental Services Department could be asked to meet the costs involved.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) the Director of Leisure Services be authorised to sign the Grassroots Football Development Centres Programme for March 2008 to March 2011, with provision being made within the 2009/10 and 2010/2011 financial estimates
- (b) the Director of Leisure Services liaise with the Director of Technical & Environmental Services to discuss the Grass Roots Programme, in terms of income generated through facility hire and to clarify responsibility for meeting the costs involved in any future potential shortfall in income.

LS/2008/39 : RETIREMENT DINNER FOR ERIC SAUNDERS TO CELEBRATE HIS SERVICES TO SPORT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Director of Leisure Services referred Members to correspondence from the Chief Executive of Sport NI in relation to the above, with a corporate table costing £400.00. She advised that this correspondence was being tabled at all relevant Council Committees.

Following discussion, it was Members were of the view that given there was a cost involved, it would be appropriate for the matter to be considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Noted.

LS/2008/40 : TOUR OF THE NORTH INTERNATIONAL BEING HELD ON 21 TO 24 MARCH 2008

The Director of Leisure Services referred Members to correspondence from the Northern Ireland Cycling Federation/Cycling Ulster requesting use of the Lough Moss Centre and a financial contribution of £2,000.00. She added that the Council had supported this event in previous years and that the money was available within this year's budget.

She advised that the Federation had originally requested use of the centre on Easter Saturday, but due to demand for the facilities on a Saturday the request had to be refused. She added that since receiving the above correspondence in which they requested Easter Monday, she understood that the Federation had again changed the date. She outlined that she would therefore have to contact them to seek clarification in this respect.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That consideration of the Tour of the North International be deferred to the next Committee meeting in enable the Director of Leisure Services to advise the Northern Ireland Cycling Federation/Cycling Ulster of the Committee's preference for the Castlereagh stage of the race to be held on Monday 24 March 2008.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LS/2008/41 : MUGA – BELVOIR ACTIVITY CENTRE

The Director of Leisure Services advised that following the official opening of the MUGA at the above centre, new signage was required. She asked if Members wished for the sign to relate exclusively to the Belvoir Activity Centre or whether a joint sign be erected to include details of the recycling facility. She advised that Belvoir Players would probably want to erect a notice board where the information could be changed as and when required.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that the Director of Leisure Services liaise with the Director of Technical & Environmental Services, with a view to erecting joint signage with details of the Belvoir Activity Centre and the recycling facility.

LS/2008/42 : BIG LOTTERY FUND

The Director of Leisure Services advised that Officers had applied for a grant through the Safe & Well programme which focused on disadvantaged groups throughout the Borough and assist them in pursuing a healthy lifestyle. She advised that a number of partners had been identified, but Castlereagh would be the lead partner. She added that a letter had been received confirming that a development grant of £21,000.00 was being offered.

She added that she was seeking permission to sign the letter of acceptance which required to be returned to the Big Lottery by 28 February 2008, subject to her ensuring that the criteria was not prohibitive. She explained that at this stage she would merely

be accepting the Terms & Conditions, and the Council would have the prerogative to decide not to accept the grant as long as the project had not commenced.

Alderman Norris proposed that the Director be authorised to sign the letter of acceptance, and this was seconded by Councillor McCoy

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that the Director of Leisure Services be authorised to sign the letter of acceptance of the grant of £21,000.00 from the Big Lottery through the Safe & Well programme, subject to her ensuring that the criteria was not prohibitive.

LS/2008/43 : ROBINSON CENTRE

The Area Manager briefed Members on a Health & Safety issue in relation to the tiled floors within the wet areas of the Robinson Centre, and in particular the female changing area.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) given the health & safety implications, the Area Manager be authorised to arrange to have the floor tiles treated with an anti slip agent in the female changing area of the Robinson Centre, with the costs being met out of the 2008/2009 financial year.
- (b) the Area Manager to prepare a report on any similar work required for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee

There being no further business the meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Adopted by the Council this _____ day of

_____ 2008 with the exception of

Minute Nos. _____

MAYOR

