

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 3 January 2008, at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

ALDERMAN: J Norris MBE
COUNCILLORS: Mrs A M Beattie
J Beattie
D Drysdale (in at 7.40 pm)
S. Duncan (in the chair)
Mrs V. McCoy

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Chambers Hanvey, Long and Tosh

LS/2008/01 : ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee, it was

RESOLVED: that Councillor S Duncan chair the meeting.

TABLED : MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2007(copy previously circulated)

MATTERS ARISING

LS/2008/02 : ROBINSON CENTRE – DDA WORKS (Minute No. LS/2007/137 refers)

The Director reported that at its December meeting the Council had approved the quotation in respect of DDA work at the Robinson Centre and the work was now under way.

Noted

LS/2008/03 : INSURANCE COMPANY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ROBINSON CENTRE (Minute No. LS/2007/138 refers)

The Area Manager Leisure reported that the installation of a remote signal for the Robinson Centre fire alarm system had been deemed essential by the Council's insurers

and that the costs would be approximately £1,136.00 + VAT. He advised that Surefire would make the appropriate amendments to the fire alarm system and that Diamond Security would make the link to the intruder alarm system by which any alarm activation was monitored. Members were asked to note that there was a £375.00 + VAT annual monitoring and line rental charge. He also advised that, due to the necessity to install Redcare on a non ISDN line that had no other alarm usage, an additional BT line was being installed at a cost of £106.00 + VAT with line rental of £40.00 approximately per quarter.

The Area Manager advised that the costs were within the Council's spending limits and that authorisation had been given for the work to proceed. He indicated that the work would proceed as soon as BT installed the additional line.

Noted

LS/2008/04 : LOUGH MOSS WIND TURBINE (Minute No. LS/2007/139 refers)

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing reported that the Council, at its December meeting, had given approval to carrying out a wind analysis at a cost of £6,300 plus VAT. He indicated that the analysis would confirm whether there was sufficient wind power to justify the turbine and the Council would then have to decide whether it was more profitable to use the power itself or to sell it back to the National Grid. He also advised that the Department of Finance & Personnel had been asked to confirm that the grant could be rolled out to 2008/09 before the expenditure on the wind analysis was committed. He indicated that he would keep the Committee advised of developments.

Noted.

LS/2008/05 : MISPLACED LODGEMENT AT LOUGH MOSS (Minute No. LS/2007/141 refers)

The Director of Leisure Services reported that officers were still awaiting feedback from the Northern Bank regarding the misplaced lodgement.

Noted.

LS/2008/06 : EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR PITCH PROVISION AT LOUGH MOSS AND BILLY NEILL CENTRES (Minute no LS/2007/148 refers)

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the Expressions of Interest document had been issued and the deadline for responses was 1 February 2008.

Noted.

LS/2008/07 : ROBINSON CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

The Director of Leisure Services reported that a meeting of the Robinson Centre Redevelopment Working Group would be arranged in the near future.

Noted.

LS/2008/08 : OUTSTANDING INVOICE FOR CAPITAL WORKS AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE (Minute no. LS/2007/150 refers)

The Director of Leisure Services reported that the outstanding invoice in the sum of £9,482.25 in respect of capital works carried out at the Robinson Centre in 2001 had now been settled.

Noted

LS/2008/09 : FALSE ALARM ACTIVATIONS AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE (Minute no LS/2007/151 refers)

The Area Manager Leisure reported that there had been no false alarm activations at the Robinson Centre for the requisite three months and that Diamond Systems were applying for reinstatement on behalf of the Centre.

Noted.

LS/2008/10 : RECEPTION FOR SALTO SPECIAL GYMNASTIC CLUB & OFFICIAL OPENING OF BELVOIR PITCH (Minute no LS/2007/154 refers)

The Area Manager Leisure reported that it was proposed that a reception would be held on 22nd January 2008 to mark the success of the Salto Special Gymnastic Club in the World Special Olympic Games and that the official opening of the Belvoir Pitch would proceed on 24th January 2008. The Director of Leisure indicated that these were civic events and would be organised by the Central Services Committee. She advised that formal notifications would be sent out to Members in due course.

Noted.

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

LS/2008/11 : TRADING ACCOUNTS FOR THE LOUGH MOSS, BELVOIR AND ROBINSON CENTRES

The Business Manager tabled 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 was £43,972 and that the main area of concern was the Robinson Centre where the adverse variance amounted to £47,563.

In response to Members' queries, the Business Manager indicated that there were several factors that had led to lower than expected income for the Robinson Centre. She advised that the previous year the Centre had benefited from the fact that Avoniel and other leisure centres in Belfast were closed for refurbishment and the reopening of

these centres had worked against the Robinson Centre in the current year. She also referred to the fact that the diving boards had been out of action for a period of several months while replacements were ordered and delivered. The Area Manager Leisure also indicated that the poor summer had had an adverse affect on customer numbers at all leisure centres.

In response to a query by Councillor J Beattie, the Business Manager advised that expected income by the end of the year was £613,000 against expected costs of £923,132, leaving an adverse variance of £308,132 over the three leisure centres.

Councillor A.M. Beattie queried whether maintaining a cafeteria at the Robinson Centre was a cost effective option and suggested that vending machines might be a more practical alternative. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing referred to the need to maintain catering for parties at the Centre but suggested that this could be reduced to weekends only. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED: That officers review the catering arrangements at the Robinson Centre and provide detailed options for Members' consideration at a future meeting.

LS/2008/12 : SHOKK PRESENTATION

The Area Manager Leisure advised that the presentation by Shokk had been deferred to a future Committee meeting.

Noted.

LS/2008/13 : PRICING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2008-2009

Members considered pricing recommendations for 2008-09 together with a prices comparison chart comparing key activity prices in Castlreagh with those in a number of other Councils and private enterprises (copies previously circulated). The Area Manager Leisure reported that prices had largely been increased by 4% as in previous years and an explanation had been provided where prices remained static or differed from 4%.

Members also considered details of Breathe/CBC fitness suite prices and competitors' prices were provided for comparison (copy previously circulated). The Area Manager Leisure reported that it had been agreed with Breathe Management that there would be minimal change to the pricing strategy in relation to partnership activities largely due to competition from the private sector and, in particular, the likelihood that JJB would be expanding their fitness operations in Connswater and possibly Forestside.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED; That Members approve the pricing recommendations for 2008-2009 as recommended by officers.

LS/2008/14 : CHILD PROTECTION UPDATE

In response to a request that Members be updated on Child Protection issues, the Area Manager Leisure reported on current developments.

The Area Leisure Manager advised that the Council's Sports Development Officer was also fulfilling the duties of Child Protection Officer. As well as providing staff training in child protection issues, the officer also chaired the Council's Child Protection Working Group and represented the Council on the Local Government Child Protection Working Group and at Area Child Protection meetings for the South & East Belfast Trust.

The Director of Leisure Services indicated additional support was required for the Child Protection Officer and the issues had been raised with the Management Team. She advised that, as no one else was trained as a trainer, the Council was vulnerable in terms of its capacity to fulfil its statutory commitment. She also indicated that child protection issues applied to all Council departments and was not therefore an issue that was solely the responsibility of the Leisure Services department.

The Area Manager Leisure reported that the next meeting of the Child Protection Working Group would be taking place on 28 January 2008.

Noted.

LS/2008/15 : ISSUE RAISED AT NOVEMBER BUDGET CONTROL MEETING - OVERSPEND AT BELVOIR

The Area Manager Leisure sought retrospective approval for an overspend of £1,244.00 in the Kids Club expenditure budget at Belvoir. He advised that an element of the overspend related to the purchase of equipment that would also be used for courses and training sessions throughout the year. He also advised that some staff costs had not been initially coded correctly and that this was being corrected by the Finance Officer. He indicated that, additionally, the Summer Scheme had run for a week longer than the previous year, largely due to the increased demand, which resulted in additional staff costs and play equipment. He added however that the income was up by over £1,000 on the previous year.

RESOLVED that retrospective approval be given to an overspend of £1,244.00 in the Kids Club expenditure budget at Belvoir.

LS/2008/16 : ISSUE RAISED AT NOVEMBER BUDGET CONTROL MEETING - SHOWER PRESSURE AT BELVOIR CHANGING ROOMS

The Area Manager Leisure updated Members in relation to the shower pressure in the changing rooms at Belvoir and the need to run off excess hot water on a daily basis to purge the system of trapped air. He reported that the hot water tap was run off whenever there was an air lock that affected the water supply to the centre. He advised however that the run off water was cold and, once it began running warm, the tap was turned off, therefore minimising any loss and additional heating costs. He also reported that maintenance staff at the Robinson Centre had identified that a circulation pump was

working incorrectly and the repair/replacement of this pump might improve the situation further.

Noted.

LS/2008/17 : ISSUE RAISED AT NOVEMBER BUDGET CONTROL MEETING - ADVERTISING REVENUE

The Area Manager Leisure confirmed that the company, Visualise North, responsible for the installation of the plasma screens at the Robinson, Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres had been invoiced for £1,500.00 net, with £500 to be credited to each of the centres.

Noted.

LS/2008/18 : ISSUE RAISED AT NOVEMBER BUDGET CONTROL MEETING - POSSIBLE USE OF THE BILLY NEILL CENTRE BY BREATHE/EZE FITNESS

The Area Manager Leisure reported that he had previously raised with Breathe/Eze Fitness the possibility of providing a facility at the Billy Neill Centre but at that stage it had not been considered a viable option. However with additional housing development in the neighbourhood and possible future development of the Centre by the Council, further discussion had taken place with Eze Fitness Management to consider developing a facility at the Centre.

Councillor Drysdale enquired whether the development of a mini-golf course at the centre had been considered. The Area Manager Leisure referred to a very successful development of 5 a side pitches at the Valley Leisure Centre and also to the possible development of 5G pitches, which would not be affected by inclement weather. He indicated that expression of interest in options for developing the Centre could be sought from interested parties.

Noted.

LS/2008/19 : STAFF UNIFORMS

The Area Manager Leisure sought approval from the Committee for purchase of uniforms for Robinson Centre staff. He advised that there was currently £315.75 left in the uniform/health and safety wear budget for the current year and that £1,402.50 was required to purchase the uniforms required for recreation, reception and administrative staff. He indicated that this would result in an overspend of £1,086.75.

The Area Manager reported that there were 30 contracted members of staff who required track suits/fleeces/t-shirts, 6 contracted reception/administration staff who required full uniforms and had not received a new uniform in 2 years and approximately 50 casual staff in various roles who also required uniforms. He indicated that there were some members of staff coming on duty who did not have a uniform and some whose uniforms were very threadbare.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing pointed out that the budget for staff uniforms at the Council's civic building had been £150-£200 per person (for winter and summer uniforms on alternate years) and had included staff who did not hold front line posts. In comparison, the budget for Leisure Centre staff had been £500 for all staff and this included H & S items. Staff at the Robinson Centre were customer facing, frontline staff doing manual work causing their clothes to be washed on a daily basis. He stated that monies received from Coca Cola had been used to supplement the uniform budget but that this was not sufficient to meet current requirements.

Members expressed a reluctance to approve an overspend in the budget particularly in view of the fact that there were only a few months left to the end of the financial year. After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Area Manager Leisure be authorised to purchase new staff uniforms within the confines of the available budget
- (b) That officers be asked to report back to the Committee on details of the amount and scheduling of payment of Coca Cola monies

LS/2008/20 : STAFF INCENTIVE SCHEME

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing reminded Members that, at its meeting in October 2007, the Committee had approved, subject to consultation with HR and approval from the Finance & General Purposes Committee, a staff incentive scheme to be implemented in the Lough Moss, Robinson Centre and Belvoir Activity Centres. HR had advised that it would be prudent to consult with the Local Government Auditor and the Tax Office before proceeding with implementation of the scheme.

Noted.

LS/2008/21 : SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members of a new statutory duty for sustainable development, which required public bodies to comply with the new Sustainable Development Strategy (copy of strategy document had been previously circulated). She reported that sustainable development offered a unifying and coordinated framework which would ensure the effective and efficient delivery of Council services and provided a mechanism to integrate a number of other Council strategies such as economic development, community planning, the power of well being, air quality, etc.

The Director stated that, while the Council already contributed to the issue of sustainable development by its policies and practices, there was now a reinforced need to comply with the statutory requirements. She advised that the Council had appointed a senior "champion" to ensure the effective implementation of this duty. The Director

stated that the development would directly affect the way Leisure Services currently operated and that all future services would be required to comply with the new legislation.

Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LS/2008/22 : NAMING OF BELVOIR PITCHES

The Director of Leisure Services sought Members' views as to whether they wished to select a name for the new pitches at Belvoir. The Director also circulated a flyer advertising the pitches for Members approval.

With regard to the official opening of the pitches on 24 January 2008, it was noted that a representative from the IFA, either Nigel Worthington or Howard Wells, would be in attendance. The Director advised that Tesco had agreed to sponsor a league for local teams and suggested that a representative should be invited to attend the opening ceremony. It was noted that the official opening was a civic event and came under the auspices of the Central Services Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the pitches be known as "Belvoir Pitches" or words to that effect rather than named after a specific person.
- (b) that the Committee approve the advertising flyer for the pitches.
- (c) that Councillor A.M. Beattie, as Chair of the Central Services Committee, would take into account the Committee's comments regarding invitees to the opening ceremony.

LS/2008/23 : WOMEN IN SPORTS OFFICER

The Director of Leisure Services reported that the Women in Sports Officer post had been vacant since September 2007 and efforts to fill the vacancy had been unsuccessful. She indicated that Parity had advised that they could provide a graduate student to fill the vacancy for a six month period commencing in March 2008. The Director advised that this was a funded post and there would be no cost to the Council

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the placement of a Parity graduate student to fill the post of Women in Sports Officer for a six month period from March 2008.

LS/2008/24 : CHP AT ROBINSON CENTRE

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing reported that the CH plant at the Robinson Centre had saved 83 tones of carbon emissions since June 2007. He stated that the cost savings had been £17,176 but that a corresponding amount had been taken out of the budget at the start of the year. In response to a query by Councillor J Beattie, The

Area Manager Leisure advised that a maintenance contract for 2008/09 had been included in the estimates.

Noted.

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

_____ 2008 with the exception of

Minute Nos. _____

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE