

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Leisure Services Committee meeting, held in committee, in the Robinson Centre, on Thursday, 2 October 2008, at 7.30 p.m.

ALDERMEN: M Copeland
J White

COUNCILLORS: Mrs A Beattie
J Beattie
Mrs M Chambers (from 7.45 pm)
B Hanvey
L Walker

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Alderman Norris and Councillors Ms Bunting, Mrs Duncan, Mrs McCoy and Tosh

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

TABLED: MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE AREA MANAGER LEISURE (copy previously circulated)

LS/2008/139 : SPORTS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Area Manager Leisure referred to a previous request for approval to employ a Sports Development Assistant, initially on a fixed one-year contract, to assist the Sports Development Officer, whose workload that included the development of the Council's Child Protection Policy and delivering Child Protection training to Council employees in all departments. The Committee had resolved to allocate the sum of £14,000 in the Estimates for this purpose.

The post had only recently been filled, therefore it was expected that there would be an underspend in the salary allocation. As a result of other initiatives and programmes, including the Active Communities Programme, the Council's Sports Development strategy and delivery and development of a disability programme within the Sports Development strategy, as well as still being the only Council Officer qualified to deliver Child Protection training, the Sports Development Officer's workload had not decreased. Officers felt that there was merit in the Sports Development Assistant post, which had been

evaluated at Scale 3, being extended for at least a further year, to be re-evaluated at that time. However, although there was sufficient provision for the salary in the current Estimates, the current figure would not allow the employment of the current post holder for a full year beginning April 2009.

Members were now asked to consider the following options:

- Provision of the sum of £14000 plus cost of living allowance, which would provide for the employment of the current post holder for part of 2009.
- Re-visit the possibility of employing a student for the full year.
- Continuation of employment of the current post holder for a full year, commencing in April 2009, at a cost of £22,000.

The Area Manager Leisure explained that the Sports Development Officer was the designated officer within the Council with responsibility for child protection training. However, her duties as Sports Development Officer had also changed, she had become more involved with a wider range of sports.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised concerns that not all staff members had received their training in child protection. Councillor Beattie stated that child protection training should be a priority, and he proposed to refer the issue to Management Team for consideration. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing replied that this issue had been discussed previously by the Management Team, but he assured Members that he would bring it to their attention again as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Chambers felt that, rather than employing a Sports Development Assistant, Officers should ascertain the cost of bringing in a trainer to carry out child protection training. Alderman Copeland seconded the proposal, and it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Officers source an appropriate outside training body to carry out child protection training in the Council and provide details on the outsourcing costs.
- (b) That, if necessary, a special Committee meeting be convened to consider the cost of appointing a person to carry out child protection training in the Council.

LS/2008/140 : THE 3RD ADAPTED NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CONFERENCE

The Area Manager Leisure sought approval for the Council's Sports Development Officer and possibly one staff member from Community Services to attend the third Adapted National Physical Activity Conference in Killarney on 17 and 18 November 2008. As Council Officers, including the Sports Development Officer were currently preparing an application for possible funding from Sport NI in relation to the Active Communities

Programme, which focused on disability, this conference would be a great opportunity for the Sport Development Officer to learn about inclusion and new disability programmes prior to submission of the Active Communities bid. Furthermore, the itinerary also included consideration of potential funding opportunities (Disability NI will be present) and new initiatives and disability programmes to assist in the delivery and development of disability programmes within the Sport Development Strategy.

The cost to attend the conference is €175 per delegate plus accommodation at a cost of €100 for a single room or €60 per delegate should two people attend and share a room. The Area Manager Leisure confirmed that there was sufficient budgetary provision available to cover these costs.

Following some discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to grant approval for the Sports Development Officer to attend the 3rd Adapted National Physical Activity Conference on 17 and 18 November 2008, at a cost of €175 plus up to €100 per night accommodation for two nights.

LS/2008/141 : GRASSROOTS PROGRAMME – KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Area Manager Leisure took Members through the key recommendations for Local Authorities in the Grassroots Programme. These recommendations had been made following an independent evaluation carried out by the University of Ulster in June 2008 and focused on requirements to be implemented by the IFA in partnership with Local Authorities to enable the Grassroots Programme to develop further and become self-sustaining.

The Area Manager Leisure recalled that the Council had approved support of the Grassroots Programme until 2011. The income generated so far this year was approximately £8,000, and it was anticipated that at the end of March 2009, the income generated would be £12,000 to £14,000, which would be reinvested into the Programme. The agreed contribution by the Council for salary costs was £15,334 for 2009-10 and £15,936 for 2010 to 2011. The Area Manager Leisure advised that, if the same level of income was generated in the next financial year, there was a possibility of an income shortfall of £2,000 or £3,000.

Following some discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended not to make provision in the Estimates for any anticipated shortfalls in income in respect of the Grassroots Programme.

LS/2008/142 : STRATA REPORT

The Area Manager Leisure stated that Officers from Castlereagh and Lisburn had been liaising as part of the Active Communities Programme, and Lisburn City Council had identified and commissioned a research programme

providing analysis and supporting data for activity trends of children in school years 7, 9 and 11. He continued to say that analysis of the data provided a context for sports development work in the local authority and identified various factors that influenced levels of participation in sport.

The Area Manager Leisure advised that Lisburn City Council intended to repeat the survey in April/May 2009, and it would appear on a strategic level to make sense to extend the survey to Castlereagh, due to the impending RPA implications. The cost to the Council, including analysis and production of results, was £10,000. However, in the past, Lisburn City Council had achieved part funding through from several sources, but it was anticipated that there would be a cost associated with the commission being extended to Castlereagh.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised concerns regarding this additional expenditure for the Council, as the boundaries of the new councils had not been finalised yet, therefore it was

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended not to join Lisburn City Council in participation in a survey providing analysis and supporting data for activity trends of children in school years 7, 9 and 11.

REPORT FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER (copy previously circulated)

LS/2008/143 : TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager took Members through the trading accounts for the period up to 31 August 2008. She stated that rising energy costs and underachievement in income were largely responsible for adverse variances. However, she added that it was anticipated that savings should be realised through the closure of the café in the Robinson Centre.

The Technical Manager circulated charts, showing energy consumption in the Council's leisure facilities from 2005 to the present. He advised that consumption had decreased slightly in that period, but, as prices were continuing to rise, it was difficult to budget effectively. Furthermore, there was a backlog of maintenance work, most of which was essential, at a cost of approximately £30,000.

During the ensuing discussion, Members raised concerns in respect of rising costs and falling income and the subsequent difficulties faced by the Council in keeping subsidies at the current level. Councillor Hanvey felt that it was important to determine the exact cost of essential maintenance work in order to estimate the budget for the financial year 2009-2010.

Following some further discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Officers prepare a projection of income and expenditure for 2008-2009, including recommendations to erase any possible deficit.
- (b) That Officers prepare recommendations in respect of subsidies for the financial year 2009-2010.
- (c) That the Technical Manager prepare a report in respect of existing defects and required repairs relating to the spa pools in the Robinson Centre together with a report detailing all outstanding/backlog maintenance for the Centres and associated costs – highlighting essential (operational) maintenance, legislative maintenance and desirable maintenance.

**REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL MANAGER
(copy previously circulated)**

LS/2008/144 : LOUGH MOSS WIND TURBINE – PROGRESS TO DATE

The Technical Manager advised that there had been a slight delay in commencement of the foundation work, which had now been scheduled for early to mid October. However, the contractor was confident that the deadline of 31 January 2009 would be met. Members were asked to note that the second payment was due around November 2008 prior to delivery.

Noted.

LS/2008/145 : ROBINSON CENTRE HEALTH SUITE RECEPTION AND FEMALE CHANGING ROOMS

The Technical Manager advised that tenders to repair above-ground damage to the walls and floors in the Health Suite reception and the female changing area would be issued in early October 2008.

Noted.

LS/2008/146 : LEISURE FACILITIES – BEMS UPGRADES (Minute LS/2008/124 refers)

The Technical Manager stated that the cost to install a BEMS system at Belvoir Activity Centre had been quoted at £7,895 by TAC Satchwell, which was more than the capital provision made for the project. However, TAC Satchwell had agreed to carry out all BEMS work, including upgrades at Lough Moss, the Robinson Centre and installation of a BEMS system at Belvoir, for the amount of capital provision the Council had available.

Following some discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to grant approval for the installation of a BEMS system at Belvoir Activity Centre and upgrades to the

BEMS systems at Lough Moss Centre and Robinson Centre, with capital provision being available for this work.

LS/2008/147 : ENERGY CONSUMPTION AT LEISURE FACILITIES

The Technical Manager advised that, although energy costs had risen drastically, consumption in the Council's leisure facilities had remained in line with previous years.

Noted.

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

LS/2008/148 : SAFE & WELL PROJECT

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing tabled a full draft of the C-SAW Big Lottery funding application for Members' perusal (electronic copy previously circulated). He stated that this was the last opportunity for Members' comments before submission of the application on 29 October 2008.

Noted.

LS/2008/149 : ASSISTANT PLANT ENGINEER

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing sought approval for the creation of a new relief/casual Assistant Plant Engineer post at the Robinson Centre, to carry out menial tasks and therefore free up the Plant Engineers' time and allow them to carry out PPM and scheduled maintenance tasks.

The General Manager advised that the post would be funded from the underspend resulting from the closure of the Robinson Centre café in the current financial year and provision would be made in the Estimates for 2009-2010.

During the ensuing discussion, Members agreed that appointing a relief/casual Assistant Plant Engineer would free up time for the Plant Engineers. Councillor Hanvey commented that Officers could provide a cost analysis on a monthly basis to show savings to the Council, and this would allow Members to decide on the continuation of this post following a trial period.

Councillor Walker proposed to employ a relief/casual Assistant Plant Engineer until the end of December 2008 on a trial basis and then review the post. The proposal was seconded by Alderman White, and it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council be recommended to grant approval for the employment of a relief/casual Assistant Plant Engineer on a trial basis until 31 December 2008, with funding being provided from an underspend as a result of the Robinson Centre café.
- (b) That the Council review the employment of a relief/casual Assistant Plant Engineer following the trial period ending on 31 December 2008.

LS/2008/150 : LOUGH MOSS – USER GROUP MEETING

Councillor Hanvey informed Members that users of the Lough Moss Centre had shown a lot of interest in the proposed additional facilities, although he added that there had been no indication that these facilities would definitely be provided.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing stated that no promises had been made, but that provision of additional facilities would be dependent on the achievement of grant funding.

Noted.

LS/2008/151 : BELVOIR - OPEN DAY

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that an Open Day would be held at Belvoir Activity Centre on Friday, 10 October 2008, from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm. He continued to say that a grant of £5,000 had been secured from Sport Relief to advise people with disabilities of available activities and to encourage them to avail of these opportunities, and Members were welcome to visit at any time on the Open Day to meet these specific user groups.

Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LS/2008/152 : ABSENCE POLICY

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing drew Members' attention to a reissued Council's Absence Policy, which stated that employees were required to notify their line manager within one hour of their expected start time if they were ill. He continued to say that this arrangement would not be suitable in the leisure facilities, therefore he sought local agreement to change this requirement to four or five hours before starting work.

Following some discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to grant local agreement, stating that employees of the Council's leisure facilities should notify their line manager of absence due to sickness four or five hours before they were expected to start work.

The meeting ended at 10.05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

MAYOR