

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Special Council meeting held in the Council Chamber, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB on Thursday 18 September 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs A M Beattie (in the Chair)

ALDERMEN: M Copeland
J Norris MBE
J White

COUNCILLORS: J Beattie
J Bunting
Mrs J Cochrane
Mrs S Duncan
C Hall
M Long
Mrs V McCoy
J Spratt MLA
L Walker

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Leisure Services, General Manager Leisure & Marketing, Planning Officer, Capital Projects Officer and Assistant Members' Services Officer. Consultants – Mr D Mackin, Mr K Watt, Mr S Couples and Mr P Wilson.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received on behalf of Alderman Mrs Rice, Mrs Robinson, Councillors Drysdale, Hanvey, Henderson, Robinson, Jeffers, Tosh and Mrs Hughes.

2008/610 : PRESENTATION FROM FGS McCLURE WATTERS RE ECONOMIC APPRAISAL

The Director of Leisure advised Members that the representatives from FGS McClure Watters had been invited to the meeting, in order that they could present their recommendations regarding the Economic Appraisal of the facilities at DIIB. She continued that this had previously been presented to the Leisure Park Board, who had requested that full Council hear tonight's presentation. The Director advised that Officers wished to progress with the preparation of a business case which would enable them to investigate any potential funding opportunities available.

The Chairman welcomed the representatives from FGS McClure Watters to the meeting.

Mr Declan Mackin commenced the presentation by providing a brief outline of the document and specifically referred to the Terms of Reference.

Mr Ken Watt detailed the existing conditions of the site and referred to a location map, following which he proceeded to outline the six possible options as follows:

- Option 1 – Do Nothing
- Option 2 – Essential Works Only
- Option 3 - Refurbish Existing facility – Floor Space 8919 sqm
- Option 4 – New Build/Existing Provision – Floor space 8919 sqm
- Option 4a – New Build/Existing Provision and allow for some additional provision – Floor Space 10,301 sqm
- Option 5 – Refurbish/Expanded Provision – Floor Space 10,039 sqm
- Option 6 – New Build/Flagship Facility – Floor Space 13,224 sqm

A summary of the draft report, as prepared by FGS McClure Watters was then circulated for Members' consideration.

Mr Mackin advised that Option 1 ranked first in terms of economic cost with the lowest NPC, Members agreed that to do nothing was not an option, as the existing facility would close within 2/3 years.

He continued that from a purely qualitative perspective, Option 6 was allocated the highest weighted score in terms of non monetary criteria, this option was the second most expensive in terms of NPC, after Option 5. No clearly dominant option with lowest NPC and highest weighted score emerged from the analysis. Assessing the options in terms of economic cost per unit of qualitative benefit (NPC/NMS) Option 4 was identified as the 'Do Something' Option providing the lowest cost per unit of non monetary benefit.

Mr Mackin continued that subject to key areas of risk being adequately addressed they were recommending the development of Option 4 – Business Preservation (New Build).

Members referred to the capital loan costs associated with the project and also discussed the outstanding loans against the existing facility. Whilst Members noted that option 4, as detailed, was the preferred option, the Director of Leisure advised that this was based solely on the economic appraisal results and stressed that Officers now wished to progress with the preparation of a comprehensive business case. She anticipated that most of the research for the business case could be undertaken 'in-house'.

The Director of Leisure advised that these figures did not allow for any private sector investment, public sector funding or land sales which could potentially offset some of the costs, she stressed that she was keen to investigate any potential funding opportunities available.

Following a query from Alderman Copeland it was confirmed that a 10% optimism bias had been build into all figures.

At this stage in proceedings the Consultants left the meeting. Councillor Spratt thanked the Consultants for the work which they had done in respect of this project.

Councillor Spratt advised that he welcomed the Economic Appraisal document, adding that Officers now needed to be permitted to progress with the preparation of a business case immediately, as time was of the essence. He continued that having fully considered the document he proposed that Officers consider two Options - Option 4a and Option 6. Councillor Spratt stated that the Ice Bowl was not just a facility for Castlereagh but the whole of Northern Ireland and that to simply rebuild a like for like facility would lack vision for a forward thinking Council.

Councillor Bunting concurred. She stated that the Ice Bowl was a flagship facility throughout Northern Ireland. To proceed with Option 4 would not give the potential for the new facility to grow and flourish, adding that no one would wish to see a total repeat of what had gone before.

The Chief Executive reiterated these comments.

Discussion then ensued in respect of RPA and the outcome of the Boundary Commission's decision and in particular the implications that this may have on the Robinson Centre. The Director of Leisure stated she felt that this might be an appropriate time to consider incorporating a wet facility within the new development at DIIB. Councillor Walker concurred with the Director's comments.

Councillor Spratt advised that he would be keen to hear the views of the other political parties present. He advised that, although a number of Members of the Board were not present at the meeting, he was aware of the fact that they were keen to see the progression of a new development at DIIB.

Councillor Duncan advised that the Alliance Party fully supported the decision to proceed with a new build facility a DIIB. She too agreed that this should be a facility suitable for 2011, one with a clear vision and direction and therefore agreed that it should either be option 4a or 6.

Councillor Copeland also concurred on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party.

It was therefore

RESOLVED: - Members

- (a) agreed to permit Officers to progress with a business case based on Options 4a/6, with authority granted for the appointment of design consultants for the preparation of concept designs, which will also allow

a planning application to be submitted. All associated costs to be tabled and agreed by the Leisure Park Board;

- (b) requested that Officers should give strong consideration to the incorporation of a wet facility as part of the overall business case;
- (c) Officers to proceed to investigate all potential funding opportunities which might be available;

There being no further business the meeting ended that 8.25 p.m.

MAYOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE