

## **CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the proceedings of the special Leisure Park Board meeting held, in committee, in the Board Room at Dundonald International Ice Bowl on Wednesday, 15 September 2010, at 10.00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Alderman J Beattie  
Alderman M Henderson  
Alderman J White (In the Chair)

**COUNCILLORS:** D Drysdale  
B Hanvey  
G Robinson  
S Skillen  
J Spratt

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Director of Leisure Services, Director of Finance,  
General Manager Leisure & Marketing, DIIB  
Project Manager Leisure Services and Members'  
Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors  
Bunting and Long

### **LPB/2010/99: DECLARATIONS OF INTERESST**

There were no declarations of interest.

Noted.

### **LPB/2010/100: REDEVELOPMENT OF DUNDONALD INTERNATIONAL ICE BOWL**

The Director of Leisure Services advised that representatives from the Council had been on a fact-finding journey in England in order to view at first hand several options being considered for inclusion within the Leisure Park. The Director of Leisure Services then took Members through the briefing document.

#### **1. Introduction**

- The Economic Appraisal had been carried out.
- The Economic Appraisal had been refreshed with revised terms of reference.
- The Business Case had been completed.
- Discussions had taken place with the Strategic Investment Board and their consultants.
- Progress had been made with DETI towards funding availability.
- A fact-finding trip had been carried out to England and local projects examined.

- The purpose of the meeting was to obtain approval for actions required to progress the project.

## **2. Status of Economic Appraisal / Business Case**

- The refreshed document was complete.
- Refreshed terms of reference: a wet facility with 2nr 25m pools, one of which would incorporate a floating floor; a pad-and-a-half ice rink; a multi-storey carpark.
- The preferred option nr 16 had been ranked third in the final results. Option 16 was an enhanced phased refurbishment of the existing services with the addition of 2nr 25m pools, one with a floating floor, a pad-and-a-half ice rink and a multi-storey carpark (overall floor area 15,681m<sup>2</sup>).
- Note: ranked first had been option 6 which was a new build of the existing facility and the incorporation of 2nr 25m pools, one with a floating floor, a pad-and-a-half ice rink and a multi-storey carpark (overall floor area 12,543m<sup>2</sup>). Ranked second had been option 5 which was a new build of the existing facility (overall floor area 8,919m<sup>2</sup>).
- The current proposal was a refined version of option 16, supported by the fact-finding trip to the UK in June 2010 with JW & MH (only 1nr pool).
- The SIB concurred with the DIIB Officer's recommendation to proceed with the preparation of a client brief for an updated / refined option 16.

The Director of Leisure Services commented that the Council needed to bear in mind that the economic appraisal reflected what would be best for the economy in Northern Ireland and not necessarily for the Council. She continued to say that the Council might be eligible for funding from the Department for Enterprise, Trade & Investment. Furthermore, the Department and the Strategic Investment Board had indicated that they were in agreement at this stage with the Officers' recommendations to the Leisure Park Board.

Councillor Spratt urged caution. He felt that the Council should wait until the Government budget decisions had been made public in October, in order to take any public spending cuts into consideration. The Director of Leisure Services advised that the funding, as previously detailed, had been from a European fund and therefore was not likely to be affected by the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Alderman White reminded Members that there could be a grant of up to 50% of the eligible capital elements available from the European Union.

## **3. Wet facility**

- The current proposal for DIIB was for a reduction in the wet facility to 1nr 25m x 6 lane wide pool with a floating floor; 1nr children's play pool; several slides / flumes which would be demountable for the main poolside to create a fun pool theme. This would be a similar facility to the Grove Wellbeing Centre. No gala seating would be provided,

however. The first-floor café would overlook the pool. Until such times as an architectural design was progressed, the pool provision could be increased if required.

- This wet facility would be capable of being heated substantially by the heat dump from the ice rink plant and therefore would have greatly reduced running costs of the plant.
- The main pool would be capable of use by local schools, colleges, clubs etc for formal swimming lessons and coaching but also as a fun / leisure pool for parties.

The Project Manager advised that the ice rink heat dump would provide approximately 80% of the pool's heating requirements, therefore running costs would be greatly reduced. Furthermore, a rectangular pool with a floating floor would be highly efficient in terms of its functionality and good value for money serving all age groups.

Alderman Beattie enquired whether the efficiencies included the costs of the pool treatment chemicals. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that these would not be included, however, the principle running cost of a pool was the heating. Staffing the pool was also an additional cost.

Councillor Hanvey enquired whether Officers had investigated what facilities were available in the area, ie a radius of six to 12 miles, in order to offer facilities that were not already in existence. The Director of Leisure Services replied that swimming lessons were taking place at maximum capacity at the Robinson Centre, but there was evidence to support there were advantages in the inclusion of a pool in the Ice Bowl. The Sport NI "Bridging The Gap" report in 2009 had stated that there was an under-provision of pools in the area. There would also be little competition with North Down District Council or Belfast City Council. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing added that having a rectangular pool and a paddling pool would complement the Indianaland facility for small children.

Alderman Henderson agreed and stated that the research in England had shown that offering wet facilities provided a good mix of activities to suit a wide range of age groups and footfall would be increased.

#### **4. Pad-And-A-Half Ice Rink**

- The estimated construction costs for the additional half pad would be approx 33% of the cost of the full pad.
- The half pad would be adjacent to the main Olympic-sized rink but would have a dividing wall to enable two events to be staged at the same time.
- The addition of the half pad supported greater use by Belfast Giants and an increased lessons programme.
- The half pad area would be ideal to hold trade shows, job fairs etc as supported by DETI. The perimeter of the half rink would only require a barrier to handrail height and therefore be easily demountable to allow an interlocking flooring to be laid over the ice pad.

- Interlocking flooring would be provided for the Olympic rink size but could be used for both.
- Olympic rink to have seating for approx 1,500; half pad to have none. Any increase in seating capacity beyond this level would have consequential impacts on a cross-range of issues
- Fact-finding visit to further investigate the half pad might be necessary as approved in Minute ref. LPB/2010/58(c).

Councillor Hanvey enquired whether 1,500 seating capacity would be sufficient. Alderman White felt that this would be sufficient, for example, to hold ice hockey matches with the Belfast Giants during the week. However, it would not be sufficient for weekend matches. The Director of Leisure Services advised that seating capacity of more than 1,500 would have a knock-on effect in a number of different areas, ie toilets and car parking. The greater the seating capacity, the more car parking would have to be provided and the capital cost of the project would rise. However, pull-out seats would be a possible option if additional seating was required. The General Manager asked Members to consider the purpose of the facility. Members agreed that they were not trying to create an events venue to compete with the Ulster Hall, Odyssey or Waterfront.

The Director of Leisure Services pointed out that there appeared to be very little choice of activities for teenagers and young people, ie high ropes, climbing walls etc. Officers were currently investigating how best to fill these gaps.

Councillor Robinson enquired whether ice hockey players or skaters had been consulted in respect of the rink layout. Furthermore, he felt that the seating capacity needed to be considered. The Director of Leisure Services replied that the Belfast Giants had been consulted regarding their requirements. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing stated that the layout block plans tabled were only an outline guide at present until an architect had fully designed the complex. Once approved by the Board, consultation would continue but it had been limited so as to manage expectations and avoid false hopes or rumour.

## **5. Car park Options**

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the architect acting for the SIB had advised that the planning requirement for car parking for a redeveloped complex would be approximately 800 spaces, which would influence the overall development areas of the site, therefore, various options would be considered:

- Option A – full-fill DIIB parking requirement.
- Option B – Joint venture with Eastpoint for a multi-storey car park located adjacent to the caravan park where a proposed overflow car park was being considered.

The Director of Leisure Services stated that it would not be possible to erect a multi-storey car park on the DIIB land adjacent to the main roundabout as it would block sight lines to the building. She suggested that the land adjacent to the caravan park could be converted into an overflow car park.

Councillor Robinson enquired whether the issue of car parking had been discussed with the proprietors of Eastpoint. The Director of Leisure Services replied that if Eastpoint wish to develop their site, they would have to comply with the planning requirements to provide sufficient car parking to service their new development and that their application would be assessed independently from the Council's application. The planning office would not take account of any adjacent car park under separate ownership. The General Manager also advised that, in satisfying the requirements of planning, the area adjacent to the caravan park would be the overflow for the DIIB as and when required. Little expenditure would be required in the early stages of the project, however, if Eastpoint wished to negotiate with the Council for additional car parking at a later stage, then a multi-storey could be erected at that location with minimal disruption to the Council.

## **6. Fact Finding Trip to UK (28-29<sup>th</sup> June 2010) – venues visited**

- National Ice Centre, Nottingham
- Planet Ice, Coventry
- Ice, Sheffield
- Goals Football, Sheffield
- The Foundry, Sheffield (climbing centre)
- The Climbing Works, Sheffield (bouldering centre)
- The Dome at Doncaster Lakeside
- Ski Village, Sheffield

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the visit had been worthwhile, as many advantages and disadvantages had become clear and further options for partnership investment had become available. The DIIB Project Manager showed Members photographic examples of the above facilities.

## **7. DETI Funding Application**

- EU Structural Funds – The European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for NI 2007-2013 focused on jobs and growth and it supported the Government's regional strategy by promoting investment in research and development as well as encouraging enterprise and entrepreneurship within an overall context of sustainable development.
- Funding is based on a 50% grant of eligible costs - ceiling had been indicated at present due to current levels of funds available.
- Stage 1 – an application form had been completed and a meeting had been held with the DETI team. The project had been approved to proceed to stage 2.
- Stage 2 – application details were being prepared for submission by 24<sup>th</sup> September.

- DETI would commission their own Economic Appraisal as required by the EU.
- If successful, eligible Council expenditure prior to approval could be submitted for grant assistance, which would include partial recoument of Economic Appraisal costs to date.
- Outcome of approval by DETI would mean that the Council would need to match-fund (as a minimum).
- Essential elements of the DETI application to be considered: new enterprise; job creation; sustainability; high speed broadband.

The Director of Finance took Members through various options in respect of financing by way of loan charges. The three options outlined were as follows:

- A) Loan(s) could be taken out at a fixed rate of interest over 30 years. The current rate applicable would be 4.1%.
- B) Loan(s) could be taken out at a variable rate of interest over 30 years. The current rate applicable was 0.7%. This option would obviously need to be reviewed on a regular basis.
- C) Loan(s) could be taken out using a mixture of A) and B).

The Director of Finance went on to explain that there was potential for substantial savings to be realised by the Council by considering option B), given the current economic climate and the fact that variable rates were the same today as they had been in March 2009. However, the Director cautioned that, if the Council decided to go down this option, then robust monitoring systems would need to be built in to ensure that the Council was not exposed to sharp increases in variable interest rates.

The Director also explained that there would be substantial loans dropping out of the portfolio next year which would greatly assist the financing of the project without increasing the District Rates.

## **8. Football Cages**

- Evaluate local competition – Play Ball at Stormont Pavilion (all external pitches), complemented Hanwood.
- Proposed mix of indoor and outdoor 3G pitches, which would enable use at all times and avoid inclement weather; reduced construction costs; retained ground level parking at rear.
- Changing facilities etc located in the main building.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that, following an evaluation, it had been determined that this type of facility would complement the Hanwood facility and could also be used to host parties etc.

*Councillor Robinson requested that his concern be recorded on the proposals for the possible inclusion of a gym and five aside cage football, in that he felt that it could potentially conflict with other Council sponsored projects. (Please note that at the Leisure Park Board meeting held on 20/09/10 this paragraph was added – minute ref: LPB/2010/131 refers)*

## 9. Ten Pin Bowling

- Relocate to “dry” side of complex
- Reduce to 20 lanes
- All new equipment

Councillor Robinson enquired if there would be a period of closure for the bowling complex within the overall phasing plans. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing stated that, in order to maintain business continuity, it was the intention to retain the existing ice rink until the new facility was operational, however, the bowling might have to close for a period during its relocation, but that this would be dependant on the architect’s final design and overall project phasing strategy.

## 10. Snowsports

- Activities - skiing, snow boarding, tubing, tobogganing and snow blading.
- Snowflex surface material – high performance synthetic system (launched in 1996). Good for all skill levels; soft to fall on; carpet-like system much safer than Dendix material; low carbon footprint; could be used all year; low maintenance and hard wearing.
- Evaluation of local competition – Craigavon Ski Centre (65m long main slope, nursery slope, button tow, floodlit, café in lodge). The slope was all Dendix material which was currently heavily worn.
- Partnership opportunity available.

The Director of Leisure Services stated that opportunities existed to enter into partnership with a private enterprise. She added that there was demand for this type of facility, but she was unsure whether demand was sufficient to warrant the investment.

Members felt that, as there was a growing interest in snowsports, the Council should give consideration to installing a snowsports facility.

The Project Manager explained the two main types of surface material which are available: Snowflex and Dendix. Dendix was the original open-cell brush material and Snowflex appeared more like a carpet with a superior health & safety record and was much more user-friendly. The material was produced by Briton Engineering in England. The company had built ski slopes all around the world and they would consider setting up a slope and managing the facility in partnership with the Council. This would minimise the Council’s capital expenditure and running costs.

Alderman Henderson proposed that this option should be considered in more detail at a future meeting. The proposal was seconded by Alderman White.

(Councillor Spratt left the meeting at this point, 11.30 am)

## **11. Possible partnerships**

- Breathe Fitness – pay and play gym
- Briton Engineering – snowsports facility (ski, snowboard, tubing etc)
- Play At Height – indoor climbing wall and external high ropes adventure course
- Aerial Extreme – external high ropes course
- Playing For Success – education and sport joint venture
- Battlefield Sports – laser quest / airsoft arena
- Libraries NI – very interested but no funding available at present. They wish to be kept informed of progress as they would move if funds become available in the future.
- GP surgeries / Health Trust – local GP practices are keen to relocate but awaiting meeting with Trust. Auxiliary services – pharmacy, physiotherapy, dentist etc.
- Car parking (Joint venture with Eastpoint developer)

The Director of Leisure Services advised that there had been interest from various businesses to enter into partnership. Alderman Henderson commented that Belfast City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council were currently leading the way in respect of combining various facilities such as GP, pool etc. He stated that he would try and obtain further information.

## **12. Environmental Sustainability (eligible by DETI for grant assistance, essential criteria for evaluation of application)**

- Wind turbine-circa £1M
- Bore hole for water
- Rainwater harvesting / grey water recycling
- Heat dump from rink plant
- Low carbon / green materials
- Combined heat and power plant (CHP)

The Director of Leisure Services felt that the erection of a wind turbine might be beneficial for the Council.

## **13. Travel and Accessibility**

- Additional Translink bus stop on the site or on main road.
- Feasibility of dedicated bus to transport users to site (sponsored).

The Director of Leisure Services stated that this issue had already been discussed at Council.

## **14. NITB**

- Web based info point in reception area / official tourist info point.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that it was intended to provide information via the Internet, which would also benefit the caravan park.

During the ensuing discussion, Members agreed that signage for the Leisure Park was not very good. Councillor Robinson suggested to ask the Roads Services to provide additional signage. He hoped that this would increase footfall in the new facility.

(Councillor Robinson left the meeting at this point, 11.45 am)

### **15. Health & Wellbeing**

- Progression of new Leisure Strategy to take account of Health & Wellbeing, Total Place and progressing Leisure to be a preventative frontline service.
- Take the 'lessons' learned from Grove to possibly develop similar local facilities.

The Director of Leisure Services suggested that the Council could promote the prevention of health problems etc through the new facility.

### **16. Arts and Culture**

- The multi-use function rooms would enable art exhibitions, craft works to be displayed and workshops to be held.
- Short-term hiring-out of the ground floor units for specific events.

### **17. Sponsorship**

- Corporate opportunities could be investigated (e.g. Santander, Tesco, ASDA, HSBC, O2, BT etc).
- Individual elements of the complex or term agreements for the site.

The Director of Leisure Services felt that individual elements could be explored at a future date once an outline model or concept had been agreed which could be presented to potential sponsors.

### **18. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister - Play and Leisure Policy**

In order to comply with the implementation of the above policy, the following were a requirement:

- Outdoor interactive play area attached to Indianaland
- Picnic areas around the site
- Walking / trim trail

The Director of Leisure Services stated that the Council could promote opportunities for children and young people.

## 19. DDA & POCVA

- Consider the legal requirement and best practice.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that all legal requirements and best practices would be considered at the design phase.

## 20. Marketing and Sports / Leisure Development Officers to run programmes for all activities

- For example, Nottingham has a dedicated team for the centre.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that in the long term resources and continuous development would be required to meet any improvements in business. Staffing levels would need to be considered to ensure that maximum utilisation of the facility was obtained through outreach and sponsorship programmes. She further stated that approval had already been granted for a site visit as required in respect of the pad-and-a-half to obtain more detailed information.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Alderman White, seconded by Councillor Hanvey and

### RESOLVED:

- (a) Formulation of the full Client Brief and specification to facilitate the appointment of a design team to progress the DIIB redevelopment to planning stage.
- (b) Officers to tender for the design team using an evaluation scoring matrix of cost 55% and quality / experience 45%.
- (c) Officers to tender for trial wind turbine mast consultants.
- (d) Officers to progress planning permission via the Council's Planning Officer for a trial wind turbine mast.
- (e) Agreement given to the terms and conditions of the DETI funding, to include at least match-funding at this stage.
- (f) Officers to contact Briton Engineering regarding a partnership in respect of snowsport facilities.
- (g) Officers to obtain more detailed information regarding joint ventures or investment opportunities and engage in exploratory talks where necessary and report back to the Board.
- (h) That the Leisure Parks Board's opposition to the proposed development of a filling station on the lands at Eastpoint be recorded. (Please note that at the Leisure Park Board meeting held on 20/09/10 point (h) was added – minute ref: LPB/2010/131 refers)

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**LPB/2010/101: PROMOTION OF THE BOROUGH**

Councillor Drysdale suggested that the Council should improve the promotion of the Borough, ie through the memory of George Best, who grew up in Castlereagh Borough Council.

Noted.

As there was no further business, the meeting ended at 12.00 noon.

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**CHAIRMAN**

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**MAYOR**