

## **CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the proceedings of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held, in committee, in the Council Chamber, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB, on Thursday, 8 December 2011, at 6.09 p.m.

**PRESENT:** P O'Reilly (In the Chair)

**ALDERMEN:** J Beattie  
S Duncan

**COUNCILLORS:** A M Beattie (from 6.15 pm)  
M Copeland  
M Gregg (from 6.44 pm)  
C Hall  
T Jeffers  
V McCoy (from 6.13 pm)  
T Morrow  
T Sandford  
J Spratt  
J White (from 6.21 pm)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Director of Leisure Services, General Manager Leisure & Marketing, Capital Projects Officer and Member Services Officer.

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Howard, Long, Drysdale, Chambers, Hanvey, Vitty and Aldermen Henderson, Rice and Robinson.

### **LS/2011/100: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (6.09 pm)**

Members and Officers were invited to declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests (including gifts and hospitality) they should have in respect of items on the agenda.

- Councillor Spratt declared an interest in any items raised in relation to Northern Ireland Assembly Committees, particularly the Department of Regional Development
- Councillor Copeland declared an interest in any items raised in relation to Northern Ireland Assembly Committees

Noted.

### **LS/2011/101 TABLED: MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2011 (copy previously circulated) (6.09 pm)**

Noted.

**LS/2011/102: ROBINSON CENTRE – PROPERTY CONDITION REPORT AND PROPOSALS (Minutes 2010/789, 2010/790, LS/2011/67 and LS2011/87 refer) (6.10 pm)**

The General Manager circulated copies of the powerpoint presentation due to be received on the Property Condition report and proposals for Members' attention.

(Councillor Jeffers temporarily retired from the meeting at 6.14 pm).

The Director of Leisure Services reiterated that RPP Architects Ltd had been commissioned to conduct a full engineering property condition report on the Robinson Centre and representatives (led by Mr Harry McConnell) were in attendance to present their report to Members.

(Councillors Beattie and Jeffers entered the meeting at 6.15 pm).

Councillor Spratt expressed concern that this was a major issue and a substantial number of Members were not in attendance. He proposed that on the basis of the wider issues relating to Belfast and the Leisure Strategy in its entirety and the implications of RPA, a Special Meeting should be held in January 2012 and the presentation be deferred until that date. In the interim, the RPP Architects should be tasked to identify only those works that were essential for the incoming year.

(Councillor Sandford left the meeting at 6.20 pm)

The Director of Leisure Services responded that the Consultants had already been asked to focus on the immediate needs of the Robinson Centre as part of their brief.

(Councillors White and Sandford re-entered the meeting at 6.21 pm)

The Director of Leisure Services further advised that whilst Officers had built in reasonable predictions and projects for minimum essential works into the estimates for 2012-13, these did not take into account any provision for unforeseen maintenance or plant failures.

(Councillor Jeffers temporarily left the meeting at 6.22 pm)

Councillor Spratt further proposed that Members might wish to retain their copies of the report until the Special Meeting has been convened but that the content be treated as confidential until all Members had had an opportunity to discuss it.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that she would arrange for a summary report to be prepared which should assist members in considering the wider information pertaining to this project and it would summarise the immediate works required for the Robinson Centre

RESOLVED (6.23 pm):- That:

- (a) That the presentation by deferred and a Special Meeting be convened in January 2012 to discuss the property condition report and proposals for the Robinson Centre in the context of the wider issues of the Council's Leisure Strategy in its entirety and the implications of RPA.
- (b) Officers task RPP Architects Ltd to concentrate on those works that were deemed essential for the incoming financial year.
- (c) That Members who wish to retain the Property Condition Report on the Robinson Centre until the Special Meeting, regard the content as confidential.
- (d) Officers prepare a summary of the essential works required for the Robinson Centre to be forwarded to members in advance of the special meeting.

**LS/2011/103: TRADING ACCOUNTS (6.25 pm)**

The Director of Leisure Services circulated trading accounts to the end of Period 7 – September 2011.

(Councillor Jeffers re-entered the meeting at 6.25 pm)

She outlined that the trading accounts were currently on budget and that the Robinson Centre, Lough Moss Centre and Belvoir Activity Centres were ahead on income levels and in a favourable position. She reiterated, however, that Leisure's income streams had suffered on a year on year basis but the budgets had reflected these trends.

(Councillors Copeland and Spratt temporarily left the meeting at 6.27 pm)

The Director of Leisure Services outlined the total cost for the 3 centres and stated that the figures were encouraging when taking into account the reactive maintenance spend.

(Councillors Copeland and Spratt re-entered the meeting at 6.28 pm)

In response to a query from Alderman Beattie regarding the reduction of speculative income, the Director responded that the Department's income estimates had not been reduced as much as suggested but the performance had been slightly better than anticipated.

Noted.

**LS/2011/104: UPGRADE TO ROBINSON SQUASH COURTS (6.28 pm)**

The Director of Leisure Services advised that following completion of Phase 1 in relation to the upgrading of the lighting at the Robinson Centre squash courts, Officers were keen to proceed with Phase 2 which entailed the re-plastering of the walls and re-sanding of the floors. At present the poor

condition was limiting the use of the courts and thus denying the full potential to generate income (annual income for 2011-12 was estimated to be £16,600).

The cost of implementing Phase 2 was difficult to accurately determine but was estimated to be in the region of £20k-£30k. Officers recommended tendering for all 3 squash courts with the option to reduce this to 2 squash courts once accurate costs had been established. Additional capital provision had been made within the 2011-12 estimates for other refurbishment work at the Robinson Centre and remained available to fund this work.

(Councillor Copeland temporarily left the meeting at 6.38 pm).

Councillor Spratt again reiterated the need to look at this matter in context to RPA and he referred to the need for a Working Group to be set up with Belfast City Council to discuss the wider issues. He cautioned that prior to discussion in relation to these wider issues, the Council should not be making any major expenditure in the interim. He referred to the present condition of the squash courts and he queried what sort of income they generated at the present time.

The Director of Leisure Services replied that it was likely that income streams would be affected should the surfaces remain as they were and she advised that squash provided a viable source of income for the Robinson Centre. She advised that the squash surface had perished and the floor was in a poor condition and income could be adversely affected, which would have to be reflected in next year's estimates. She suggested that Officers could progress the tender to obtain a more accurate price on the understanding that any quotation submitted be held for a period of six months. Whilst there were 3 squash courts at the Robinson Centre, the Director felt that it was reasonable to progress improvements to 2 of the courts. Once accurate quotations had been received, Members could consider the tenders and the Council would only have incurred the minimal costs of the advertisement on the website for the tender and Officers' time.

Alderman Duncan asked if the squash court floors were useable and did they comprise part of the Eze Fitness package. The Director commented that they were playable for the time being but she was not able to comment in relation to the future and whilst the users of Eze Fitness may play squash, she could not confirm any correlation.

Councillor Spratt stated that if Officers were clarifying that the squash courts were still fit for purpose and generated a degree of income, there were no immediate closure issues. If the tender process was implemented with the 6 month price hold, it would not be of any serious cost implication to the Council. He asked if the expenditure for the project had already been ring fenced.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the expenditure for the works had been set aside from the capital budget and therefore could not be carried forward. She suggested that Officers could test the market in the interim and obtain a more accurate price.

(Councillor Gregg entered the meeting at 6.44 pm).

Councillor Morrow commented that he was in favour of obtaining a more accurate quotation so that Members could make an informed choice in relation to the costs for repair and the income generated. Councillor Spratt added that the tender should indicate that the work may not commence for some time in the future.

(Councillor Copeland re-entered the meeting at 6.45 pm)

Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED (6.46 pm):-** That, Officers

- (a) Be instructed to implement the tender process to obtain a more accurate quotation and that any prices received must be held for a period of 6 months.
- (b) Proceed to tender for the works and evaluate / select the contractor based on 80 % cost and 20 % experience, after consideration of all necessary qualifying criteria such as insurance etc
- (c) Present detailed quotations and tender documentation to the Leisure Services Committee at a later stage.

(Alderman Duncan temporarily left the meeting at 6.47 pm).

**LS/2011/105: USER GROUP MEETINGS (6.48 pm)**

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the following dates for the User Group meetings for Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres were as follows:

- Belvoir : Tuesday, 28 February 2012 at 7.00 pm
- Lough Moss : Wednesday, 15 February 2012 at 7.00 pm

(Alderman Duncan re-entered the meeting at 6.48 pm).

Noted.

**LS/2011/106: COMMUNITY RATES – ADMISSION CHARGE REVIEW (6.49 pm)**

Members were advised that Leisure Services Officers were working with Community Services Officers in a review of the pricing policies that each department applied to its users. It was anticipated that some common ground would be found that would make the pricing policies more consistent with regard to both community use and perceived commercial hire of community and leisure facilities. The review and recommendations would be brought to the Leisure Services Committee in February 2012 with the recommendation that the agreed structure would be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. The

pricing policies were however quite diverse and the review was a complex one. Members were also advised that the impact, where income was to be altered, would be factored into the next draft of the estimates so that the Estimates Working Group could consider the impact for 2012-13 budgets.

The Director of Leisure Services referred to correspondence previously circulated which highlighted the current disparity in the pricing charges and the Pricing Policy that Community Services had implemented and it detailed the criteria necessary to avail of discounted rates.

Moving forward with the review, it was anticipated that common ground would be found before the review is brought to the respective committees in February for consideration. With a view to making leisure facilities more accessible and affordable to bona fide community groups it was recommended that the same definitions would be applied – Community Groups should be established and governed by an open and accountable governing document (constitution, memorandum and articles of association etc.).

It was also anticipated that the harmonisation of summer schemes with Community Services would be implemented in Summer 2012 and details would be brought back to Committee once available.

Councillor Spratt referred to the Council's facilities and he reiterated that Members had specifically requested that Community groups should have access to a meeting room or hall in which local communities could meet. He was of the view that as this review would have no major impacts, it should be progressed collectively through the Senior Management Team.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED (6.51 pm):-

- (a) that the purpose of this harmonisation was to give Community Groups a room or hall in which to hold meetings
- (b) that the same definitions will be applied within leisure services as in community services - Community Groups should be established and governed by an open and accountable governing document (constitution, memorandum and articles of association etc).
- (c) that sports clubs do not avail of such community rate discounts
- (d) The exclusion of commercial entities from such arrangements, unless benefit to the local community can be proven. This will be subject to an evaluation;
- (e) presentation of this review, in tandem with the annual pricing review (including Eze Fitness) is brought to the Leisure Services Committee in February 2012.

**LS/2011/107: SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES UPDATE (6.52 pm)**

The Director of Leisure Services referred Members to an update on Active Communities and Sports Development from the Sports Development Officer.

Councillor Jeffers informed Members that Mr Denis Boyd was currently in ill-health and the Committee wished to pass on their best wishes at this time.

Noted.

**LS/2011/108: ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE (6.52 pm)**

Members were advised that some diverse maintenance and installations would be taking place at the Robinson Centre during December and it was inevitable that there would be some disruption to normal service provision during this period of facility improvement. Every effort would be made to minimise the level of disruption to users however there would be unavailable evidence of ongoing work to users.

Noted.

**LS/2011/109: ROBINSON CENTRE – LAND PURCHASE AND LIFTING OF COVENANTS (6.53 pm)**

The Director of Leisure Services had attended a meeting with the Council's Solicitor and the Director of Administration & Community Services to progress the land purchase from the NIHE along with the lifting of the remaining covenants at the Robinson Centre site. Members recalled that there were 2 historical matters that required being resolved at this site:

- Land sale from NIHE for strip of land
- Restrictive covenants

Whilst the land sale was nearing completion, the Director stated that she wished to defer the update to Members on the remaining covenants until the RPP Architects Ltd had made their presentation.

She felt that given Councillor Spratt's earlier comments on the need for a holistic view and taking regard of RPA, that it may be worthwhile to consider the wider covenants and package it all together to determine corporate position. She advised that the matter required consideration across a number of directorates and that further discussion on the matter could be facilitated at senior management team

Noted.

**LS/2011/110: INCIDENT AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE – 15 OCTOBER 2011 (6.54 pm)**

The Director of Leisure Services recalled the interim update at the last Committee meeting following the incident at the Robinson Centre on 15 October 2011. She had now received a letter from the Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) with regard to their investigation into the incident at the Robinson Centre learner pool. This would now be integrated within the Council investigatory report and considered by the Chief Executive.

The Director advised that the formal response from HSENI contained no formal actions or Notices served on the Council and if there were any issues arising from the content they would be tabled at the January Committee meeting. Officers were continuing to complete the recommendations referred to by HSENI and Officers would report back once they had been completed.

RESOLVED (6.57 pm):- That, Officers will provide a summary report following the response from HSENI in relation to the incident at the Robinson Centre on 15 October 2011 for the January Meeting of the Committee.

**LS/2011/111: FACILITY BAN (6.58 pm)**

Following an incident at the DIIB on 21 July 2010, a member of the public had been prosecuted. Members agreed that the individual concerned should be banned from the DIIB for a period of 12 months and in line with the Council's policy, the other standing Committees and Golf Club Board would be informed of this ban to enable it to be stretched to the other Council facilities.

RESOLVED (6.58 pm):- That, in line with the Council's policy, the ban for the individual concerned should be extended to include all Castlereagh Leisure Facilities for a minimum period of 12 months, with a view carried out after this period.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.58 pm.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRMAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Adopted by the Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2011 with the exception of

Minute Nos. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR