

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the special meeting of Castlereagh Borough Council, held in the Council Chamber, Castlereagh Borough Council, Civic & Administrative Offices, Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB, on Thursday, 17 November 2011, at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J White
(in the Chair)

ALDERMEN: J Beattie
S Duncan
G Rice
G Robinson

COUNCILLORS: AM Beattie
M Copeland
M Gregg
B Hanvey
C Howard
M Long
T Morrow
P O'Reilly
T Sandford
J Spratt
D Vitty

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive, Director of Technical &
Environmental Services, Client Services Manager
Assistant Member Services Officer

APOLOGIES: Apologies were recorded on behalf of Alderman
Henderson and Councillors Chambers, Drysdale,
Hall and Jeffers.

2011/618 : OPENING OF MEETING

The Mayor welcomed Members to the meeting.

Noted.

2011/619 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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 this agenda. The following Members declared an interest:

- Councillor Gregg declared an interest in item relating to Rapid Transit on the basis that he was employed by a company involved in that field
- Councillor Spratt declared an interest in issues relating to Department of Regional Development on the basis that he was Chair of the Assembly's DRD Committee
- Councillor Copeland declared an interest in issues relating to Department of Regional Development on the basis that he was a member of the Assembly's DRD Committee
- Aldermen Beattie and Robinson and Councillor Hanvey declared an interest in arc21 issues on the basis that they were nominated Members to the arc21 Joint Committee.

PRESENTATIONS

2011/620 : PRESENTATION BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM arc21 RE: RESIDUAL WASTE TREATMENT PROJECT AND OTHER ISSUES

The Mayor welcomed the representatives from arc21, Mr John Quinn and Mr Ricky Burnett, to the meeting.

Mr Burnett updated Members on progress with the Residual Waste Treatment Project and advised that they were now at the Final Tender Stage in the procurement process. He advised that one of the important aspects of the project was the decision to provide the infrastructure of 2 MBT facilities and 1 EfW facility within the arc21 region. This meant that the group was self-sufficient and its operations would adhere to the proximity principle. He stated that the procurement process had started with 9 bidders and at the final tender stage there was a single bidder with whom dialogue was continuing to reach a final agreement.

Mr Quinn outlined how the main risks involved in the project would be balanced between arc21 and the contractor. He stated that a key factor in a successful contract was to assign the risks to the party best able to bear them.

(Alderman Duncan arrived at 7.17 pm)

He reported that arc21 would be responsible for land assembly and supply of waste and the contractor would be responsible for technologies and capacity. Planning consents and compliance would be shared responsibilities. He advised that early in the process the group had decided to acquire the land rather than have this responsibility passed to the contractor. He stated that the group had also committed to the supply of the critical mass of waste. He stated that the contractor would bear the responsibility for ensuring that the technologies were in place and fit for purpose and that the plants had adequate capacities to deal with incoming waste.

Mr Quinn reported that the project was one of the biggest public sector procurement exercises to have taken place in Northern Ireland and that Gateway Reviews of the process were carried out periodically by external

bodies, the most recent of these in May 2011. He advised that the findings of the review had been very positive with reference made to a well defined project, strong and effective governance and strong engagement by Councils.

Mr Quinn advised that the Review Team had made 3 recommendations:

- To conclude consideration of the bidder proposed variant solution;
- In terms of affordability, to approach the bidder to determine whether an acceptable contract was achievable
- Timetable for completion to award should be reduced.

He stated that, following the recommendations, the group had suspended dialogue with the bidder to consider the affordability issue and had then gone back to the bidder to advise regarding financial limits. The bidder had confirmed that he could meet the affordability requirement.

(Councillor Long left the meeting at 7.24 pm)

Mr Quinn stated that the group had had financial support for 2 years in terms of the procurement process and further support was conditional on the review findings and recommendations. He confirmed that, on the basis of the review findings, the Department would provide ongoing financial support.

Mr Quinn reported that arc21 was a contracting vehicle and did not have powers to raise income nor did it own the waste. Accordingly, he advised that supplemental agreements between arc21 and the Councils were required. He stated that the original supplemental agreement had been agreed in December 2008 and a further contract specific agreement to pass down arc21's obligations under the contract had been approved by individual Councils in March – July 2011. He advised that the second supplemental agreement would come into force at the contract award stage.

(Councillor Copeland left the meeting at 7.27 pm)

Mr Quinn stated that the supplemental agreements also served to give the contractor and his funders confidence to commit private sector funds to the project.

Mr Quinn outlined the timetable for the remainder of the procurement process as follows:

- Dialogue Closes April 2012
- Final Tender – May 2012
- Appointment Business Case – July 2012
- Award Preferred Bidder – August 2012
- Final Business Case – October 2012
- Contract Award – November 2012
- Contract Commence – April 2013

Mr Quinn referred to forthcoming strategic issues that could impact on the project including national and regional waste plans, European directives, central government budgets, RPA, renewable waste projects and the single electricity market.

(Alderman Robinson left at 7.30 pm)

The Mayor then opened the meeting to Members' questions.

Alderman Beattie enquired as to when the project would come into operation and how much it would cost ratepayers. Mr Quinn advised that, throughout the process, arc21 had looked hypothetically at what the costs would be if Councils were to undertake the project themselves without involving the private sector. He advised that the proposal put forward by the contractor was below the shadow bid that arc21 had articulated for completing the project in-house. He advised that other factors such as landfill tax escalation impacted upon the value for money aspect of the project.

Councillor Howard arrived at 7.34 pm

Mr Quinn advised that the project's capital expenditure was in the order of £200m and it had been decided that the optimum period for pay back was 25 years. He advised that there would be an option to extend the contract for up to 10 years if it was considered necessary.

(Alderman Robinson returned at 7.36 pm)

He stated that arc21 had attempted to analyse the impact of the project on the rates and it was considered that an impact in the order of 2-3% would be acceptable. He made the point that the developments in waste treatment were a generational change. He stated that both arc21 and the contractor had been conservative in their estimates of costs and potential income generation. When the plant was operational, there would be a 50:50 income share between the contractor and arc21.

Alderman Beattie referred to the project's potential to boost the local economy and create jobs. Mr Quinn confirmed that the construction of facilities would create approximately 300 jobs and, when the facilities were operational, there would be approximately 75 jobs.

Councillor Morrow arrived at 7.52 pm

In response to a query by Councillor Gregg regarding the MBT process, Mr Quinn confirmed that the vast majority of the heat generated came from the incineration process. He advised that there was great potential for heat generation but it was much more difficult to capture heat than electricity. He indicated however that recent Northern Ireland policy initiatives would make it more viable to look at heat generation possibilities within the contract.

In response to further queries by Councillor Gregg, Mr Quinn advised that, while the group would supply the critical mass of waste, the bidder was also committed to the supply of 50k tons of commercial and industrial waste. He indicated that there would be acceptability and planning issues for any large waste treatment project. He stated that the group were building a robust process and engaging in advance with the statutory authorities so that, when an application for planning permission was made, it would have a strategic context.

(Councillor Vitty left the meeting at 8.03 pm)

Mr Quinn stated that the MBT process reduced the volume of waste by 50%. He advised that the official target for recycling was 7% but the plant would be in line to achieve 10% recycling. With regard to the energy from waste plant, he stated that thermal treatment of waste was much safer than thermal treatment of industrial processes.

The Mayor then thanked Mr Quinn and Mr Burnett for their presentation and they left the meeting at 8.08 pm.

2011/621 (8.08 pm): PRESENTATION BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT RE: BELFAST RAPID TRANSIT

The Mayor welcomed the representatives of the Department for Regional Development's Rapid Transit Division, Mr Ciaran de Burca and Mr Robin Totten, to the meeting

(Councillor Vitty returned to the meeting at 8.08 pm)

Mr Totten stated that he very much appreciated the support and interest shown by the Council in the Rapid Transit project. He then outlined the project objectives as follows:

- To provide a modern, safe, efficient and high quality public transit system
- To support sustainable economic growth and regeneration
- To provide equality through enhanced accessibility
- To support social inclusion and the integration of communities

He stated that the key themes were quality, reliability, complete system, integration and a strong Belfast image.

Mr Totten reported that a route audit report had reviewed options and had focused on land use activity, physical constraints, parking/loading issues and existing traffic conditions. A long list of routes had been sifted initially to remove undeliverable options and a high level qualitative assessment had then taken place. He showed maps outlining the city centre network and options for the east way route and the west way route. With regard to the east way route,

he advised that the possibility of using the Comber Greenway had been abandoned due to high costs and accessibility issues. He advised that the emerging preferred option for the east way route was the Upper Newtownards Road and the Albertbridge Road.

Mr Totten outlined the impacts for Belfast of the Rapid Transit system as follows:

- Significantly enhanced priority for public transport
- Reduction in capacity for private cars along routes
- Strategically located park and ride sites
- Integration with existing public transport services
- Some localised road widening and banning of turning movements
- Relocation and/or removal of some on-street parking, particularly long-stay parking
- Modifications to junctions and co-ordination of traffic signals

(Councillor Vitty left the meeting at 8.22 pm)

He stated that the regeneration/integration impacts would be:

- Belfast Rapid Transit would have an inclusive citywide identity
- It would be a key driver for the regeneration of Belfast, providing high quality access and connectivity between the different parts of the city where major regeneration projects were underway or proposed.
- It would link the most deprived communities to key employment locations, shopping facilities, leisure and education services.
- It would facilitate the growing integration and partnerships between the different communities across the city.

Mr Totten reported that public consultation had been launched in October 2011 and public exhibitions of options had been held throughout Belfast. He advised that the consultation period would end on 6 January 2012 and a business case would be prepared by April 2012. Ministerial/DFP and Executive approval of the preferred option would be in place by September 2012 and implementation of the project should be completed in 2017.

(Alderman Robinson left the meeting at 8.24 pm)

The Mayor then opened the meeting to Members' questions.

Councillor Spratt welcomed the rapid transit proposals and stated that the sooner the project got started the better. As MLA for South Belfast, he expressed disappointment that routes for South and North Belfast were not proposed at this stage but he expected that these routes would be included at a later stage. He enquired when it was expected that the rapid transit system would start operating.

Mr de Burca stated that it was hoped that implementation would start in 2014/2015. He advised that the project did not involve major construction

works and the road works required such as road widening and modifications to junctions could be completed in 18 months. He advised that the Minister had given a commitment that a business case for North and South Belfast could be looked at after the business case for the first three routes had been approved. Mr de Burca recognised the need to maintain the momentum in developing the network.

Alderman Rice referred to traffic congestion on the Saintfield Road and said she would like to see an Eway system along that route. She referred to the opposition to using the Comber Greenway for the rapid transit system and was pleased that it was not the preferred route.

Councillor Hanvey referred to the study trip to Nantes and said that it had been very useful to get first hand knowledge of a rapid transit system. He enquired what measures would be taken to overcome people's reluctance to convert from private cars to public transport and asked what legislative or other measures would be taken to stop parking in bus lanes.

Mr de Burca stated that enforcement was a major issue. He advised that discussions were ongoing with Roads Service and a new enforcement contract was due to start in 2015. He stated that towing and clamping would be a major part of that contract and any illegally parked cars would be towed around the corner and clamped. He stated that they were very aware of the need to deal with these issues but considered that they could be dealt with by a change in policy rather than by introducing new legislation. He advised that all the rapid transit vehicles would have enforcement cameras similar to those on London Transport and these would identify anyone who was driving illegally or parked illegally along the transit route. Mr de Burca stated that there would be provision made along the routes for short term parking so that local businesses would not be badly affected.

Alderman Duncan stated that she had noted that buses on the Saintfield Road were delayed due to the fact that passengers getting on did not have the right change and she enquired about ticketing and fare collection arrangements. Mr de Burca confirmed that the importance of ensuring that people could board and exit the buses quickly. He stated that there would be ticket stations along the route and all vehicles were single storey with three doors so that people could board quickly.

Councillor Spratt stated that the Council should respond to the consultation on the rapid transport system expressing its support for the plans. The Mayor pointed out that documents tabled at the meeting included a feedback form which individual Members could complete and return to DRD.

It was proposed by Councillor Spratt, seconded by Alderman Rice and

RESOLVED (8.39 pm): that, as part of the consultation process, the Council send a letter of support in relation to the Rapid Transit System.

The representatives of Belfast Rapid Transit Division left the meeting at 8.39 pm.

(Councillor Spratt left the meeting at 8.39 pm)

2011/622 (8.40 pm) : PRESENTATION BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM BEECHGROVE/GLENCREGAGH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION RE: PROPOSED PUBLIC PARK & LEISURE & PLAY FACILITIES, FORSTER GREEN HOSPITAL GROUNDS

The Mayor welcomed the representatives from Beechgrove/Glencregagh Residents Association, Mr Edwin Gibson, Mr Joe King and Mr Richard Williams.

(Councillor Spratt returned to the meeting at 8.40 pm and Alderman Rice left the meeting at 8.41 pm)

Mr Gibson outlined the proposal for a public park and leisure and play facilities in the grounds of Forster Green Hospital. He stated that the site was 23 acres and was flanked on either side by long established housing developments. He indicated that it included two relatively flat areas that would facilitate the creation of sports and play areas and that there was also adequate space for car parking. He stated that there were large tree areas on the boundary of the site that would preserve the privacy of nearby houses.

(Councillor Hanvey left the meeting at 8.44 pm and Councillor Spratt left the meeting at 8.45 m)

Mr Gibson reported that there was a broad level of support for the proposal from the Trust, the First Minister, some Council Members and local residents. He stated that local people wishing to access play facilities for their children had to take a car journey to do so.

(Councillors Hanvey and Spratt returned to the meeting at 8.46 pm)

With regard to funding, Mr Gibson considered that the project would meet the 'shared space' criteria for Peace III funding. He stated that the proposal would meet central and local government policies covering social development, removal of barriers between communities and promotion of health and well being. He outlined the benefits to be gained from the project and stated that the visitors to the park would help increase local business and employment and the existence of the park would bring a new heart to the Borough.

Mr Gibson stated that the timing issue was of particular importance as contracts would have to be put in place before RPA took effect. He felt that the timing issue meant that a staged approach to development was not possible. He was concerned that a delay in proceeding might mean that planning permission for housing or other development of the site might be approved.

(Councillor Copeland returned to the meeting at 8.50 pm)

There were no Members' questions. The Mayor advised that further consideration of the issue would take place at the Council's Technical & Environmental Services Committee. The representatives of Beechgrove/Glencreagh Residents Association left the meeting at 8.54 pm

2011/623 (8.55 pm): PRESENTATION BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM ASITIS CONSULTING RE: COWPARADE NORTHERN IRELAND 2012

The Mayor welcomed Ms Rachel Hunt of Asitis Consulting to the meeting. Ms Hunt outlined the background to CowParade Northern Ireland. She stated that it had started off in Chicago in 1999 and had been the most successful public art programme in the city's history and, since then, over 50 cities had hosted the event. She reported that CowParade was the world's largest public arts festival and a tried and tested footfall and revenue driver.

Ms Hunt stated that the event would be funded by public/private sponsorship of the cows and there would be various sponsorship packages covering individual cows and herds of cows. She stated that the sponsor would choose the art and design for the cow and a plaque at the base would identify the sponsor. The cows would be in display in public areas for 12 weeks and there would be free access for the public.

(Councillor Spratt left the meeting at 9.00 pm)

Ms Hunt outlined the schedule for the event with the official launch taking place in May 2012 at the Balmoral Show and the cows going out on location in June, July and August. She advised that in September 2012 there would be a public auction of the cows, with proceeds going to charity. She reported that two charities, Barnardos and De Paul, would benefit from the event and one of the reasons for their selection was that the monies raised would be spent on charity projects in Northern Ireland.

She advised that it was hoped to have 200 cows in the CowParade Northern Ireland making it the biggest in Europe to date and one of the first to cover an entire region. She stated that the cows would be located at walking and tourist trails, existing attractions and town and shopping centres. They would boost visitor numbers and draw in new visitors and would increase spends at local retailers.

Ms Hunt stated that a Mini-Moo programme would be launched at the same time as the main CowParade event and this would be offering smaller versions of the cows to schools.

(Councillor Beattie arrived at 9.03 pm)

Ms Hunt outlined 3 case studies of CowParade events in Chicago, Edinburgh and Margaret River in West Australia.

(Councillor Spratt returned to the meeting at 9.05 pm)

She then provided details of the various sponsorship packages available and she suggested that appropriate locations for cows within the Borough could include Forestside and Dundonald International Ice Bowl.

The Mayor then opened the meeting to Members' questions. In response to a query by Councillor Morrow, Ms Hunt stated that, if the Council sponsored a cow, it could decide where it wished it to be located. Alderman Duncan raised the issue of vandalism to the cows. Ms Hunt stated that there had been a few instances of vandalism but that the sponsorship costs included the cost of insurance. She stated that, if a cow was damaged, it would be taken off site, repaired and replaced as quickly as possible.

In response to a query by Councillor Copeland, Ms Hunt confirmed that the event management company would deal with any planning issues or approvals that were needed.

Councillor Howard enquired about the choice of design for the cows. Ms Hunt stated that a list of artists wishing to participate in the project was drawn up. She stated that artists would put forward proposals for designs. She stated that the sponsor of a cow could select one of the artists' designs or could commission one of the artists to do a design. She advised however that none of the designs could include company branding or logos. The Mayor enquired whether a community group could produce its own design for a cow. Ms Hunt confirmed that they could do so and they could also be given the option of having an artist available to mentor and assist in the design.

The Mayor thanked Ms Hunt for her presentation and she left the meeting at 9.13 pm

It was proposed by Councillor Spratt, seconded by Councillor Copeland and

RESOLVED: that the CowParade proposal be referred to the Technical and Environmental Services Committee for consideration.

2011/624 : BEECHGROVE/GLENCREGAGH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION PROPOSAL

Councillor Spratt referred to the presentation earlier in the meeting by Beechgrove/Glencregagh Residents Association. He queried whether support for the proposals was as widespread as had been indicated and he expressed concern about the costs of creating and maintaining a public park on the site and the impact that would have on ratepayers. He doubted whether the project would be eligible for Peace III funding. He also referred to the approach of RPA and felt it would be likely that major projects such as this would be put on hold within the next 12 months.

Councillor Beattie stated that a lot of local residents were not aware of the proposals for the site. She considered that in the current economic climate proposals for a play ground would be acceptable but that people would not wish to see their rates increased to cover the costs of providing a public park. Alderman Duncan agreed with Councillor Beattie that local people would welcome the provision of a playground but not a public park. She felt that the Residents Association did not realise the extent of expenditure that would be required to purchase and create a park of over 23 acres and then maintain it.

Councillor Hanvey made the point that there were areas within the Borough, such as Four Winds, that did not have the same level of play and leisure facilities as others. He referred to the play audit being carried out by the Council which would determine the future strategy for provision of play facilities within the Borough and he stated that capital provision for any proposals should be included for consideration in the estimates process.

Councillor Spratt agreed with Councillor Hanvey's comments. After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Spratt, seconded by Councillor Beattie, and

RESOLVED: that the Council write to Beechgrove/Glencregagh Residents Association advising that

- it would not be in a position to proceed with the proposal for a public park in Forster Green Hospital grounds because of the current economic climate and the impact that this level of capital expenditure would have on ratepayers in the Borough
- an audit of play facilities within the Borough was being carried out which would lead to a strategic review of play provision in the Borough. Dependant on the outcome of that audit and review, the Council might be in a position to consider a proposal for play facilities within the grounds of Forster Green.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.33 pm

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MAYOR