

## **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, 16 June 2011, at 6.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Drysdale  
(in the Chair)

**ALDERMEN:** J Beattie MBE  
M Henderson MBE  
Mrs G Rice MBE  
G Robinson

**COUNCILLORS:** Mrs A Beattie  
Mrs M Chambers  
M Copeland  
M Gregg (from 6.15 p.m.)  
C Hall  
B Hanvey  
Mrs C Howard  
M Long  
Mrs V McCoy  
T Morrow  
P O' Reilly  
T Sandford

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

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received on behalf of Aldermen Duncan, and Councillors Cochrane, Jeffers, White and Spratt

### **LS/2011/29 : 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 the agenda.

As a relative of the organiser, Councillor Copeland declared an interest in Minute No. LS/2011/43.

Noted.

**TABLED : MINUTES OF THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 MARCH 2011 (copy previously circulated)**

### **MATTERS ARISING**

**LS/2011/30 : CASTLEREAGH SPORTS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION – THE SPORTS AWARDS 2011 (Minute No. LS/2011/21 refers)**

The Director of Leisure Services stated that a number of Members had attended the Sports Awards on 8 June 2011 and would be aware that the venue had been changed from the La Mon House Hotel to the Civic Centre. She outlined that the special guest on the evening was Kelly Gallagher, a skier with partially impaired sight from Northern Ireland. She paid tribute to Kelly for the way she had chatted to and inspired the young sports people from the Borough who had attended the event. She thanked the Officers concerned for organising a very successful evening.

RESOLVED : The Council be recommended to thank the Sports Development Officer for his efforts in organising the CSDA Sports Awards event.

**LS/2011/31 : REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE POWERS – TENDERS (Minute No. LS/2011/23 refers)**

The Director of Leisure outlined that, given the suspension of Committee meetings over the election period, the Chair of the Leisure Services Committee had been granted executive powers at the February 2011 Council meeting to approve tenders for various works, which included replacement boilers at the Lough Moss Centre. At the March Council meeting she had reported (Minute 2011/179) that Tipping Mechanical had been awarded the tender for the replacement boilers.

She advised that since looking at the detail, in terms of efficiency of the boilers and limited access to safety valves, it was decided to reconsider the matter. For an additional £2,592 the same company would reduce the number of boilers from 5 to 4 thus reducing annual servicing costs, could extend the warranty from one to two years, and install more efficient boilers (82.2% to 96.7%) that would achieve an annual saving in gas bills of approximately £4,400.

She advised that the cost could be met out of capital provision.

Following a detailed discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that the contract for the replacement of the boilers at Lough Moss remain with Tipping Mechanical and that an additional £2,592 be approved for this project.

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES  
(copy previously circulated)**

**LS/2011/32 : TRADING ACCOUNTS**

The Business Manager took Members through the trading accounts for the three leisure centres for the period 1 April 2011 to 30 April 2011. She referred to the summary sheet and reported that there was a favourable variance overall in relation to net cost across the three centres, compared to profiled budgets.

Wages and salaries were underspent at all centres which was largely due to year end adjustments regarding flexi, toil and annual leave carry over balances. Both the

Robinson and Belvoir Centres overachieved in relation to income compared to profiled budget. However, Lough Moss showed an under achievement which was largely due to a downturn in footfall as a result of major works in respect of the relocation of the gym and refurbishment of the reception area.

The Director of Leisure Services informed Members that the electricity provider for the centres had changed, effective from the 20 April 2011. The expenditure therefore had been understated for April in relation to utility charges. She reported that the gym at Lough Moss had attracted 35 new members since its relocation, which was promising and it was hoped that this trend would continue.

Councillor Gregg arrived at the meeting at 6.15 p.m.

Alderman Robinson sought clarification on the efficiencies being introduced to see a reduction in expenditure at the Robinson, Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that she would be updating Members on this matter later in the meeting.

Noted.

#### **LS/2011/33 : DRAFT LEISURE STRATEGY 2011-2015**

The Director of Leisure Services attached to her report the Draft Leisure Strategy 2011-2015 for Members' consideration and approval. She asked Members to note that the revised strategy was attempting to shape Leisure Services in order to support the wider health and wellbeing agenda, using collaborative and partnership opportunities, where possible. Each of the facility business plans would be produced in keeping with this revised theme and will be planned over a two year window.

She reported that the Sports Development Strategy was currently under review and would be updated once completed. She referred Members to a current overview of the sports development strategy objectives and the specific programme details.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that upon completion of the new corporate plan the strategy would be revised, if necessary. Upon approval of the draft Leisure Strategy, each facility would finalise the respective business plan, and would be brought to the July Council meeting, in the absence of a July or August Committee meeting.

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

**RESOLVED** : The Council be recommended to approve the Draft Leisure Strategy 2011-2015, and upon completion of the new corporate plan, the Strategy would be revised, if necessary.

#### **LS/2011/34 : REQUEST FOR CAREER BREAK**

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members that a full time recreation assistant based at the Robinson Centre had requested a career break beginning in September 2011, for a period of 12 months. Subject to Council approval the vacant

post would be advertised on a fixed-term basis. The Area Manager had confirmed that he had no objection to this request.

Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** : That the Council be recommended to grant approval for the request from a full time recreation assistant based at the Robinson for a one-year career break beginning September 2011.

### **LS/2011/35 : FACILITY CLOSURES DURING JULY**

Members were advised that the Robinson, Lough Moss and Belvoir Centres would close at 3.30 pm on 11 July and re-open on 14 July. The closure time of 3.30 pm was consistent with the arrangements at Christmas/New Year and would avoid the necessity to bring staff in to cover for a few hours. As in previous years, staff would take leave where appropriate under the directed leave agreement.

In response to a query by Councillor Morrow, the Director of Leisure Services confirmed that the decision to close the three leisure facilities during this period had been based on historical trends.

Noted.

### **LS/2011/36 : HEALTHWISE PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Director of Leisure Services attached to her report for Members' attention a letter from the Public Health Agency (PHA) in relation to the Healthwise Scheme that has been running very successfully at the three leisure sites. She asked Members to note that although the PHA had agreed to roll forward the existing contract to June 2011, there was no guarantee that the same level of funding would be available beyond June 30. Apart from the loss of income for the Council and Breathe, there would be less footfall and less opportunity for users to participate in a healthy lifestyle activity.

She reported that Officers were liaising with Breathe whose staff largely facilitate the activities at our 3 partnership sites. The Area Manager and the CSAW Project Manager were also considering the possibility of extending a similar scheme currently operating via CSAW. However, this project was designed to target 16-18 year olds which the Healthwise scheme did not specifically target. The amount of funding available from CASW was limited and would not fill the void left by a Healthwise funding withdrawal. She added that there was the possibility that Big Lottery may allow a transfer from one budget to another if a strong enough case is made, and once we were aware of the funding available through Healthwise, Officers would make contact with Big Lottery and ascertain what the options were with regard to a change of CSAW programme direction.

Alderman Robinson outlined that if the funding was no longer available, whether it would be possible for the Council to continue with the scheme for Castlereagh ratepayers only.

The Director indicated that whilst elements could continue through the CSAW project, it would not fill the gap and would provide a limited service only.

Councillor Hanvey expressed the view that it was unwise to remove a scheme which was keeping people healthy when the cost to the Health Trust treating someone would be much higher. He suggested writing to the relevant Department expressing the Council's concerns in this regard.

The Director outlined that she had raised this point at a senior level with officials within Department of Health, DCAL and DETI.

Councillor Chambers proposed that the Council write to the Minister, and Councillor Hanvey seconded the proposal.

Alderman Henderson suggested writing to the Local Commissioning Group and the Patient & Client Council who had been promoting this scheme for some time, advising them that the funding for the Healthwise Programme was in jeopardy.

In response to a query from Alderman Beattie, the Director of Leisure Services advised that over a three year period the funding amounted to approximately £90,000 of leisure benefits.

Alderman Beattie expressed concern that should the funding not continue and the Council agreed to operate the scheme in some form, referrals would increase and costs would rise, placing a burden on Council budgets.

Councillor Hanvey suggested that Officers contact Breathe to ascertain their views.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Director of Leisure Services

- (a) write to the Minister expressing the Council's concern that the funding for the Healthwise Scheme may not be continued beyond June 2011
- (b) write to the Local Commissioning Group and the Patient & Client Council advising that the funding for the above Scheme was in jeopardy

### **LS/2011/37 : DISPOSAL OF KILN AND POTTERY WHEEL AT LOUGH MOSS**

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members that when Lough Moss opened it had been hoped to encourage some creative skills programmes that included basic pottery classes. The initiative was however not successful and the kiln and pottery wheel have been stored away for 10 years. The working condition of the equipment could not be guaranteed and there was no intention to re-introduce the classes. As the equipment was bulky and storage space at a premium, it was recommended that the equipment be disposed of. To determine interest, it was being recommended that the disposal of the equipment be advertised within the centre, inviting closed bids and advising that the removal of the equipment would be the responsibility of the winning bidder.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to approve the in-house advertisement for the disposal of the redundant pottery equipment at the Lough

Moss Centre, inviting sealed bids to be submitted to the Director of Leisure Services by 24 June 2011.

### **LS/2011/38 : GUIDANCE ON ISSUE OF COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS**

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members that Management were frequently approached by individuals seeking complimentary tickets to aid with fund raising events. The impact upon the operational booking of the facility was seldom affected due to the ability to cope with small additional numbers, furthermore, the marketing value of such small gestures could not be under-estimated.

She recommended that the Committee grant approval for Management to have the discretion and authority to issue two complimentary tickets per activity, in response to letters and emails seeking contribution to fund raising events. For requests of more than this, the authority of the Director of Leisure must be sought.

The Director advised that the Committee that this practice would create an element of consistency with the Leisure Park Board and Golf Club Board.

Councillor Gregg sought clarification whether complimentary tickets were restricted to individuals/organisations within the Borough.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the users of the leisure facilities came from within the Borough and further afield. Management frequently received requests from schools within the Belfast area who were regular users of the facilities and commercially she welcomed this.

Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** : That the Council be recommended to grant approval to provide Management with the discretion to issue two complimentary tickets per activity, in response to written requests for a contribution towards fundraising events. Requests for more than two complimentary tickets required the authority of the Director of Leisure Services.

### **2011/39 : REPORT FROM SPORTS NI: ACCESS TO PUBLIC LAND**

Members were advised that Sport NI had published a report on publicly owned land which was used for outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland.

The Director referred to “Sports Matters - the Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport & Physical Recreation 2009-19”. She advised that within this document, improved access to the natural environment for sport and physical recreation had been identified as a critical element to enable the increase in participation in outdoor recreation to be achieved and sustained. Outdoor sports had seen a very significant rise in participation levels.

She indicated that the access legislation in Northern Ireland differed significantly from that in the rest of Great Britain, and as a result, there was significantly less accessible land for outdoor recreation.

The Director reported that in December 2009, the Countryside Access and Activities Network was commissioned to undertake research to highlight the extent and use made of publicly owned land for outdoor recreation access Northern Ireland. The outcome of this research was documented in the report concluding with a number of recommendations.

Noted.

#### **LS/2011/40 : REQUEST FOR COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS**

The Director of Leisure Services attached to her report a request from Castlereagh Nursery School for complimentary tickets for fund raising event. As the event had taken place on 14 May 2011, she was seeking retrospective approval for 2 complimentary tickets for swimming. She asked Members to note a letter of thanks from the Principal of the school expressing her appreciation to the Council.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to grant retrospective approval for the provision of 2 complimentary swimming tickets to Castlereagh Nursery School.

#### **LS/2011/41 : PERMISSION TO TENDER**

The Director of Leisure Services sought permission to tender for replacement lockers at the Robinson Centre. The lockers were attracting a significant number of complaints from the general public and an increasing amount of time was being spent on maintaining the locking mechanisms. In the last financial year the lockers brought in an income of £7,000 and as they were portable, they could be moved to another facility, if required. She advised that sufficient provision had been made in this year's Capital Estimates for this purchase.

It was being recommended that the tender be awarded based on the following scoring matrix:

90% Cost  
10% Quality

Councillor McCoy expressed the view that, whilst cost was an important factor, she felt that the quality percentage should be higher, given the ongoing maintenance problems with the lockers at the Robinson Centre.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that the lockers in the Robinson Centre were over twenty years old, and in this competitive market she felt that 90/10 was an appropriate weighting.

Councillor McCoy reiterated the view that the quality percentage should be higher.

In response to a query from Councillor Gregg in relation to electronic lockers, the General Manager Leisure & Marketing outlined that the electronic system could be problematic and Officers were recommending an updated version of the type of locker currently installed in the Robinson Centre which would generate an income.

Following further consideration, it was agreed that the scoring matrix would be based on 85% cost and 15% quality.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to grant approval for the tender process to commence for replacement lockers at the Robinson Centre using a scoring matrix of 85% Cost and 15% Quality.

### **LS/2011/42 : LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND 2012 OLYMPICS**

The Director of Leisure Services reported that a workshop had recently organised by NILGA to provide a platform for local authorities to discuss the UK wide calendar, and to consider potential local engagement opportunities in the run up to London 2012.

She attached to here report for Members consideration a copy of the documentation circulated at the workshop, along with an informative newsletter.

The Director provided Members with an overview of other opportunities available for local authorities and communities, in terms of the following:

- Cultural Olympiad & Festival 2012
- Inspire Project
- Sport Comes 2 Town
- Get Set Schools
- Local Business Opportunities
- Live Sites
- Torch Relay
- Torch Bearers
- Look and Feel

She reported that there was a vast array of opportunities which would allow local communities to engage with the run up programme. Within the Council this may cross all of the directorates, in terms of the opportunities that Members may wish to champion. In respect of the 'Look and Feel' opportunities, the option of floral displays had been passed to the Director of Technical & Environmental Services, however, there may be other opportunities that Members wish to consider.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that nominations for the torch bearers did not necessarily have to be from those with a sporting background but could be someone who had contributed to their local community.

Councillor Long referred to the torch bearers and queried why it was being anticipated that the majority would be between the ages of 16 and 24 years. He expressed the view that this should be representative of the whole community.

The Director of Leisure Services clarified that whilst it stated the majority of the torch bearers would be between the ages of 16 and 24 years, it would not preclude the Council from putting forward nominations for people either side of that age range.

Councillor Beattie suggested writing out to all secondary schools in the Borough.

Councillor Chambers expressed the view that nominations could be sought from the Council's user-groups, such as the gymnastics club at Belvoir.

Alderman Henderson suggested that Members who wish to make a nomination contact the Director of Leisure Services directly.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED : That

- (a) the Director of Leisure Services arrange for details of the Olympic run up programme to be forwarded to the following, inviting them to put forward nominations:
  - (i) all schools in the Borough
  - (ii) the CSDA via the Sports Development Officer
  - (iii) relevant leisure centre user groups
- (b) any Member wishing to make a nomination to contact the Director of Leisure Services

**LS/2011/43 : MR AND MISS NORTHERN IRELAND FITNESS MODEL CHAMPIONSHIPS, FITNESS FAIR AND OPEN FITNESS MODEL WORLD CUP 2011**

The Director of Leisure Services referred Members to correspondence from the organiser of the above event being held on Sunday 6 November 2011, at La Mon Hotel and Country Club. She asked Members to note that support was being sought in the form of the following:

- Funding towards overseas competitors accommodation
- Funding for promoting and advertising the event
- A trophy sponsored by the Council for the winner
- A Trade stand for the Council to promote Health, Fitness and Wellness
- Photo shoot with the winners for the local paper

Discussion ensued in relation to the potential to offer part of the support requested, in terms of the trophy and trade stand.

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that as there was no dedicated budget to support this type of event, she had concerns that in agreeing to the request the Council would be setting a precedent.

Councillor Drysdale suggested that the request be passed onto to Breathe for consideration, and that the Director to keep Members updated in this regard.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) Officers write to the organiser of the Mr and Miss Northern Ireland Fitness Model Championships, Fitness Fair and Open Fitness Model World Cup 2011, advising that as the request did not meet the required criteria, the Council would not be in a position to provide support

- (b) the request be referred to Breathe for consideration, and the Director of Leisure Services keep Members updated in this regard

#### **LS/2011/44 : LETTER FROM ULSTER DEAF SPORTS COUNCIL**

The Director of Leisure Services referred Members to correspondence from the above organisation which had been received in January 2011 asking the Council for a contribution towards the cost of a regular swimming coaching clinic at the Robinson Centre. Due to an oversight, the request had not tabled until now and the Area Manager has apologised to the Ulster Deaf Sports Council for this lapse in customer service.

She advised that the group had been using the Robinson Centre since February and although they had initially requested the use of two lanes on a Wednesday evening between 6.30 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. This has been reduced to one lane due to low numbers. The £2,000.00 costs referred to in the letter could be broken down, as follows:

- Approximately £1,200 for facility hire
- £800.00 for the UDSC to employ a coach who is also sign language conversant
- £14.80 for the use of one lane, which equates to £58.00 per week and £1,218 over the 21 weeks of the booking.

The Director outlined that due to a reduction in their lane request and a few occasions when the session had been cancelled, the group's invoiced total from February to June would be £580 rather than the £1,200 had the initial booking conditions had been fulfilled.

Members were advised that a number of disabled groups who use the Robinson and Belvoir Centres did not receive discounted rates. Furthermore, individual disabled users did not receive any preferential rates. She outlined that as the request would therefore be setting a precedent, she recommended that the Council did not agree to the request for a financial contribution.

Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** : That the Council be recommended to agree that the Director of Leisure Services write to the Ulster Deaf Sports Council advising that, as their request did not meet the criteria for funding, the Council would not be in a position to make a contribution towards the cost of a swimming coaching clinic.

#### **LS/2011/45 : LOUGH MOSS WATER**

The Director of Leisure Services outlined that when looking at efficiency savings, it had come to light that the adverse variance in the water bills at the Lough Moss and Robinson Centres was not as a result of leakage or power showers, but was due to the continuous flushing of the urinals. She recommended that flushing mechanisms be fitted within all the leisure facilities.

In response to Alderman Robinson's previous query in relation to efficiencies, the Director of Leisure Services outlined that whilst this was a specific example of an

operating efficiency, there were other practices where savings had been gained. She gave the example of the reduction of casual hours but there was a need to examine the whole directorate rather than quote specific and isolated examples.

Alderman Robinson stated that the Ice Bowl has been operating very successfully and efficiently over the last 4 years. Apart from staffing arrangements, he asked if other measures had been considered in order to achieve efficiencies across all three leisure centres.

The Director advised that she would like to consider in detail the main cost drivers and identify opportunities for efficiencies and report back to the Committee.

Alderman Beattie indicated that as the Lough Moss Centre sat on a water table whether consideration had been given to a bore hole.

Members were advised that a feasibility in this respect would cost in the region of £1,000.00 and subsequent ground works would cost approximately £5,000.00, dependant upon the depth of the bore ultimately required.

Following a detailed discussion, it was agreed that, given the potential long term savings a feasibility study should be carried out.

**RESOLVED :** That the Council be recommended to agree that

- (a) a feasibility study be carried out in relation to a bore hole at the Lough Moss Centre, and the Director of Leisure Services report back in this regard
- (b) the Director of Leisure Services report back on opportunities for efficiency savings at the three leisure centres

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **LS/2011/46 : “GIS A HUG” FOUNDATION**

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that the parents of the two young people who had died as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning in Castlerock had started the above foundation to raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide. He outlined that a request had been received for charity boxes in support of the Foundation to be located throughout the Council’s leisure facilities. He added that the Community Services Manager had requested that in the absence of a timely Central Services Committee, that permission be sought from Council for boxes to be placed within the community centres.

He added that the Foundation had delivered a presentation within the Civic Centres earlier that day and had agreed to issue a number of free carbon monoxide monitors through the HAP team, to rate payers within the Borough.

Councillor Chambers outlined that it was normal practice for charity boxes to be located throughout all Council facilities in support of the particular Mayor’s charity.

Councillor Drysdale suggested that Officers contact the Mayor, and if he was agreeable, that Officers write out advising the Foundation accordingly.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that:

- (a) That Officers contact the Mayor to ascertain if he would be agreeable to charity boxes in support of the “Gis a Hug” Foundation being located within the leisure centres.
- (b) That this request be extended to the Community Centres, on behalf of the Community Services Manager.

**LS/2011/47 : LEARNER POOL AT ROBINSON CENTRE**

Councillor Long advised that he had received correspondence from a constituent in relation to restricted use of the learner pool at the Robinson Centre.

RESOLVED : That Officers respond to the above letter and forward a copy to Councillor Long.

**LS/2011/48 : PRICING REVIEW**

The General Manager sought permission to bring to the September Committee, a full pricing review.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that a full pricing review be brought back to the September Leisure Services Committee.

**LS/2011/49 : INCIDENTS AT THE ROBINSON CENTRE**

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members of two separate incidents concerning behaviour by users which would be deemed to constitute unacceptable behaviour, as defined within the Council policy. She advised that one of the incidents involved a user who had consequently been prosecuted for their behaviour, and on this basis, the appropriate action from the Council was a permanent ban.

She then gave an overview of the other incident which involved a number of youths whose behaviour was unacceptable and was offensive to both staff and other users.

RESOLVED : That the Council be recommended to agree that the relevant users of the Robinson Centre be written to advising them of the respective bans, and that a report be taken to the other Council Committees/Boards supporting this ban across all Council facilities.

The Assistant Member Services Officer left the meeting.

**STAFF IN COMMITTEE**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRMAN

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

Adopted by the Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_2011 with the exception of  
Minute Nos. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR