

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure and Community Development Committee held in the Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, on Tuesday, 1st September 2020 at 6.05pm

PRESENT: Alderman M Henderson MBE (Chairman)
Councillor D Honeyford (Vice Chairman)
The Right Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor The Hon Nicholas Trimble
Aldermen A Grehan and J Tinsley
Councillors N Anderson, D J Craig, A Gowan,
M Guy, S Hughes, H Legge and R McLernon

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION: Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer
Councillors R Carlin and S Skillen

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION: Councillors A Givan and G McCleave

IN ATTENDANCE: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
PCSP/Member Services Manager
Member Services Officer

IN ATTENDANCE IN A REMOTE LOCATION: Head of Parks and Amenities
Head of Sports Services
Head of Communities

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairman of the Committee, Alderman M Henderson extended a welcome to all present in the Chamber and remotely and apologised to everyone watching on the live stream for the slight delay in starting the meeting due to a technical issue.

The Chairman asked that any Member entering or leaving the meeting alert him accordingly so that the Member Services Officer might accurately reflect arrival and departure times in the minutes.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were accepted and recorded on behalf of Councillors R T Beckett and A McIntyre.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman, Alderman M Henderson invited Members to declare any interests they might have in relation to the business of the meeting and reminded them of the requirement that they complete Declaration of Interest forms in this regard which had been provided at their places. There were no declarations of interests made during the course of this meeting.

3. Report from the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing

It was agreed that the main report and recommendations of the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below.

3.1 Major Seasonal Events

The Committee was provided with a paper relating to the three major events usually hosted by the Council between now and Christmas i.e. Halloween, Christmas Lights Switch On and the Lisburn Light Festival, and advised that due to the current government guidance restricting mass gatherings it would not be possible to host the full programme usually offered. Due to the importance that these events previously have played in the local community and in supporting local businesses, the report outlined a number of alternative events and programmes that would allow the Council to deliver more socially distanced, innovative events across the Council area e.g. working with schools to develop a Halloween arts programme, a light installation in Dundonald and other small scale family focused events.

The Director further advised that officers had applied for £100,000 funding from the Department for Communities which can be used to assist with the additional activity required to successfully deliver the Lisburn Light Festival within the current climate. He further advised that guidance may change at short notice and officers were cognisant of entering into any contracts that the Council may not be able to use if circumstances changed.

During the discussion of this item, Members sought clarification on the detail of the lighting installation being suggested for Dundonald, along with the programme of events supporting the Light Festival and were advised by the Director that this information fell to the remit of the Development Committee, but that a more detailed report on the proposed events programme would be brought back to the Committee for consideration prior to any of the events taking place.

It was proposed by Councillor N Anderson, seconded by the Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Hon N Trimble and agreed to recommend that the options as outlined in the report be agreed and progressed accordingly, subject to similar agreement being received from the Development Committee.

4. Report from the Head of Communities

It was agreed that the main report and recommendations of the Head of Communities be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below.

4.1 Community Christmas Tree Switch On Events – Grant Aid Programme 2020

The Committee was reminded that in 2018 the Council agreed a policy regarding the provision of financial assistance (up to £1,000) to local groups to develop and deliver celebratory ‘switch on’ events to mark the beginning of the Christmas season, up to and including Christmas 2020. The Head of Communities advised that in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent government guidelines, there was a need to update this policy to cover the following areas:

- Proposals must adhere to the NI Executive’s directives for Covid-19, particularly around social distancing, capacity restrictions, wearing of masks and hand washing/sanitising;
- Applications that are innovative and inclusive in nature, such as using digital methods to include individuals who are isolated to promote positive mental health and community spirit, would be welcomed by the Council;
- A suitable and alternative programme instead of an event would be considered by the Council providing it promotes community spirit and connectivity; and
- If the organisation, due to circumstances related to Covid-19 and/or other, cannot deliver the event or alternative programme within the agreed timeframe, Council will seek return of the funds.

The Head of Communities further advised that training would be available for groups, via zoom, to further support them given the current situation and related government guidelines.

During the discussion of this item, Members sought clarification on a number of issues which were addressed by the Head of Communities, including the new application process and the training that would be provided.

It was understood that the tree at Bradford Court would not be decorated this year unless funded by any future tenant. Members were advised that Corporate Services were the lead department with regards to the possibility of siting an alternative Civic tree in the Castlereagh area.

It was proposed by Alderman J Tinsley, seconded by Councillor H Legge and agreed to recommend that the Community Christmas Tree Switch On Events Grant Aid programme be approved for 2020, to include the addendum items outlined above, and that the associated budget of approximately £23,000 be further approved.

During the course of this item Councillor A Gowan left the meeting at 6.26pm.

4.2 Killultagh Community Needs and Facility Assessment

Members were asked to recall that approval had been previously granted to progress a procurement exercise to appoint a suitably qualified individual or organisation to undertake a needs analysis and mapping exercise of the Killultagh DEA and immediate neighbouring boundary areas. Members were advised that due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this work had been temporarily suspended but that officers had recommenced work on this matter and the Head

4.2 Killultagh Community Needs and Facility Assessment (cont.)

of Communities was now able to present the Committee with a draft Terms of Reference for consideration and approval.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor D Honeyford, stated that he was delighted to see this project moving forward again following the delay caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as he felt that the DEA had been neglected with little to no development included on the capital programme list. This was also welcomed by Councillor G McCleave who further queried how the refurbishment of play parks across the council area was decided and if a needs analysis of each DEA had been undertaken to determine need. The Head of Parks and Amenities provided background as to the PlayBoard NI Playability Audit previously commissioned by the Council and subsequent process for identifying the refurbishment schedule for play parks and added that the decision on how to spend the annual capital budget for the refurbishment of play parks was made by the Members of the Leisure & Community Development Committee. Alderman J Tinsley asked about a time scale to complete this work and was advised by the Head of Communities that a wide ranging and inclusive consultation process was required which would push the date in to the New Year. Councillor M Guy asked if a needs analysis of Castlereagh South could be undertaken using the same Terms of Reference and procurement exercise. The Director advised that this would be a decision for the Council due to the procurement and financial process involved, and suggested that this issue might best be examined through the community planning process instead. Councillor R McLernon asked if the tender process would return to the Committee for approval and was advised that within agreed Procurement Procedures the amount did not require Committee approval.

It was proposed by the Vice Chairman, Councillor D Honeyford, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley and agreed to recommend that a procurement exercise, to include Terms of Reference, be undertaken to secure a suitably qualified organisation/individual to undertake a community needs and facility assessment exercise to the value of £10,000.

During the course of this item, Councillor A Gowan returned to the meeting at 6.31pm.

4.3 Hilden Mill School Refurbishment and Re-invigoration Project – Update on Project

The Committee was reminded that the Council had previously purchased the former Hilden Mill Primary School with the intention of refurbishing and repurposing the building to facilitate and promote the social and economic historical role of mills, whilst providing community facilities and contributing to the economic regeneration in the area. Members were further reminded that the Council had secured Stage One funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards this development plan.

Members were advised that due to the inclement weather and increased vandalism, the condition of the building was deteriorating. As a result of further corrosion to the roof and due to health and safety concerns, the roof needs to be

4.3 Hilden Mill School Refurbishment and Re-invigoration Project – Update on Project (cont.)

sealed and walls plastered to prevent further damage being done to the listed building and the adjacent temporary prefabricated classroom also needs to be removed. The Council's Asset team have assessed the work required and estimated the cost of this work at approximately £20,000. Members were advised that a full procurement exercise has been undertaken to secure exact costings coupled with the appointment of a suitably qualified contractor to undertake the works.

During the discussion of this item a number of Members queried the length of time it was taking to progress the development of the former Hilden Mill Primary School and sought clarification regarding risks associated with third party funding if this project was not completed urgently. The Director advised Members that there had been delays outside the Council's control including around the application process for funding, the completing of an agreed business case, planning application for the site, and most recently the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on development work. The Director advised that the Council were in continuing contact with the Heritage Lottery Fund and so far they were content with the project's progression, but there was always a risk to the Council with third party funding, especially when provided in stages as there was no guarantee that any ultimate bid for capital grant would be successful at a further stage. The Head of Communities stated that there had been an internal meeting regarding this project held recently and that attempts to meet with the wider project board was ongoing but was proving difficult due to leave commitments of other parties and it was hoped that a meeting could be arranged for the end of September. It was noted that at the recent Council meeting Members had agreed to officers regularly meeting the Elected Members for the DEA to allow the Members to monitor, and be kept apprised of progress with the project.

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor S Hughes and agreed that the update be noted.

4.4 Good Relations Action Plan 2020/21

The Head of Communities advised Members that the Council's Good Relation Action Plan had been revised following advice from The Executive Office to ensure that the Action Plan could still be delivered during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent restrictions. The revised Action Plan includes more digital and innovative programmes to ensure that the programmes were as inclusive as possible. The Head of Communities presented a list of the changes made to the Committee for information and further advised that The Executive Office were content with these revisions and have subsequently released a Letter of Offer covering 75% of the programme with the Council providing match funding of 25%.

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor S Hughes and agreed that the update be noted.

5. Report from Head of Service (Sports Services)

It was agreed that the report and recommendations of the Head of Service (Sports Services) be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below.

5.1 Sports Services – Post Covid Recovery and Performance

The Committee was provided with a dashboard detailing the recovery and performance of Sports Services following the reopening of many services. The Head of Sports Services advised Members that this information related to the end of July/beginning of August and that some of the figures were a comparison with the same period last year, usually the busiest of the year.

The Head of Sports Services provided a verbal update on the impact that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic restrictions have had on services such as the reduced capacity permitted in the LeisurePlex, the closure of the lazy river, restrictions in the 25m swimming pool, Indianaland remaining closed, the reduction in bowling lanes available, the reduction in the number of people permitted in the gyms at any one time etc. The Head of Sports Services stated that there were also many positives such as the Vitality Memberships and brand remaining strong, the increase in golf memberships across both golf courses and that classes within the leisure centres remained popular with many having waiting lists. He further outlined the next steps being taken to assist with the recovery of Sports Services, including the bowling alley and ice rink being open to the public without prior booking, the reopening of the Football Factory and the opening of the new gym at Billy Neill MBE Country Park. The Head of Sports Services provided assurances that these services would be risk assessed as appropriate, that all necessary trace and track information would be captured and that where possible costs were being kept to a minimum e.g. by reducing the opening hours of facilities allowing for staff to work revised shift patterns.

During the discussion of the item, Members sought clarification regarding the reopening of the Council's activity centres and were advised that due to the age and design of these buildings, it was more difficult to ensure social distancing, therefore the reopening of these buildings was being undertaken in a phased approach allowing the Council to learn necessary lessons as well as meeting the demand of the local community. Following a question from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer regarding asset transfer of these buildings, the Director advised that this was an option which had been previously raised and that as the Council continued to review its financial planning in light of the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this and other operating options might require further consideration. Members raised queries regarding the opening of the gym at Billy Neil MBE Country Park and the staff restructuring within the unit which were answered by the Head of Service. Members complimented the Parks and Amenities team for the excellent upkeep of the golf courses.

It was proposed by Councillor H Legge, seconded by Councillor M Guy and agreed to note this update.

During the course of this item Councillor S Hughes left the meeting at 7.05 and then returned at 7.10pm.

6. Any Other Business6.1 Old Memorial Gardens at Milltown Derriaghy
Councillor D J Craig

Councillor D J Craig stated that the Old Memorial Gardens at Milltown Derriaghy had been turned into a community garden for local people to plant vegetables and flowers. This project has been beneficial for people's mental health and as a way to allow people to escape the distress caused by the ongoing pandemic. Councillor Craig asked for an update on the request submitted by this group for the site to be connected to an electricity supply. The Head of Parks and Amenities advised that he had been in contact with NIE regarding this request. He highlighted that there was a significant cost associated with this and as this had not been included in any budget, a report on this matter would go before CMT for consideration. The Head of Parks and Amenities advised that he would come back to the Committee on this matter at a later date.

6.2 Derriaghy Primary School
Councillor D J Craig

Councillor D J Craig referred to the working group that had been established previously in relation to the above. He acknowledged that due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this would have fallen down the list of priorities, however he was aware that the negotiations with the Education Authority had been at a critical stage and asked that another meeting of the working group be convened, either virtually or physically, as soon as practicable to update the members.

6.3 Blaris Walking and Cycle Path
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer raised the issue of litter, bird excrement, poor signage and lack of dog waste bins along the new Blaris Walking and Cycle Path. The Deputy Mayor advised that she was aware that this may be outside the jurisdiction of the Council and stated correspondence had been issued to DfI regarding these issues but to date, nothing had been done to address any of these problems. The Deputy Mayor queried if the walkway would be transferred from DfI to the Council through the Lagan Navigation Trust along with funding for a car park. She further queried if the Lagan Navigation Trust could provide better signage and bins in this area or if the Trust could issue a letter to DfI further highlighting these issues. The Head of Parks and Amenities advised that he understood that DfI officials were aware of the signage and litter issue, and further stated that any asset transfer issues should be progressed through the Development Committee as both the transfer of land and the remit of the Lagan Navigation Trust presently fell within its remit. The Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing undertook to raise this issue with the Director of Service Transformation.

During the course of this item, Councillor R McLernon and the Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Hon N Trimble, left the meeting at 7.21pm and 7.23pm respectively.

6.4 Hillsborough Forest Play Park
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer wished to place on record her thanks to the staff within the Parks and Amenities and the Development Units involved with the completion and opening of Hillsborough Forest Play Park. The Deputy Mayor advised that she had recently visited the park and was delighted to see it being used by so many families. The Deputy Mayor was concerned however about the number of dogs running around within the play park enclosure and the issues this caused for families using the facilities. She asked that new signage be erected and that the wardens within the park advise dog owners accordingly. The Head of Parks and Amenities stated that he was already aware of this issue and had ordered two dog hitching posts to be erected several metres apart at the entrance of the play park. He further advised that there was signage stating that only assistance dogs were permitted to enter the park but that additional signage was being created - though this would take some time to be printed and installed. Staff were also aware of this issue and while the play park was not supervised continually, staff would advise dog owners when possible that dogs were not permitted within the play park.

During the course of this item, the Right Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Hon N Trimble returned to the meeting at 7.29pm.

6.5 Outdoor Facilities and Alignment of Facility Availability
The Vice Chairman, Councillor D Honeyford

(At its meeting held on 22nd September 2020, the Council held a further discussion regarding this decision.)

The Vice Chairman, Councillor D Honeyford referred to a report previously considered by the Committee on 4th February relating to outdoor facilities and alignment of facility availability. It had been agreed by the Committee to recommend that Council regularise the position held by the Council by permitting the use of outdoor sports facilities including pitches on Sundays at all Council owned sites, in response to and where demand exists, however at Full Council on 25th February it was agreed that this report would be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

The Vice Chairman advised that he was aware that there were four issues that had arisen between the Committee and Council meetings that required further clarification and as he understood, these issues had been dealt with and therefore, he asked that the Committee now agree to progress the original decision as there was a demand for pitches to be used on a Sunday as part of the football season recommencing. Alderman J Tinsley advised that there had been concerns raised regarding pitches in rural areas, particularly those located near to churches and that there was a need to ensure effective and timely communication with local communities in advance of the pitches opening, but that if these issues could be resolved then he would be happy to support this proposal.

The Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing advised that a draft revised report had been prepared and recently considered at CMT, arising from this there remained a couple of matters that required to be clarified and the Director had

6.5 Outdoor Facilities and Alignment of Facility Availability (cont.)
The Vice Chairman, Councillor D Honeyford

intended to address these issues and bring a report to the Committee next month for approval.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by the Vice Chairman, Councillor D Honeyford, seconded by Councillor S Hughes and agreed that a report on this issue be brought for consideration at Full Council at the end of this month, and if this was not possible, then delegated authority would be requested allowing the Committee to make a final decision on this report.

6.6 Record of Thanks
Councillor S Skillen

Councillor S Skillen wished to place her thanks on record to the Head of Sports Services who recently assisted her with a query relating to the Dundonald International Ice Bowl and to the Head of Parks and Amenities for resolving an issue with the dog exercise area in Dundonald.

6.7 Hydebank Planning Application
Councillor N Anderson

Councillor N Anderson welcomed the Hydebank planning application which was recently approved and the investment in the local area. Councillor Anderson sought clarification regarding the completion of the play park and car park associated with that application and further asked that the condition of one of the existing pitches be examined by the Parks and Amenities team, as he had received comments in regard to its quality. The Head of Parks and Amenities advised that he would have someone from within his team examine the relevant pitch tomorrow. With regards to the completion of the car park at Hydebank, the Head of Parks and Amenities stated that he had just received and read the planning decision notice in detail and noticed that the Roads Service had indicated that the car park and path around the area had to be completed prior to the 3G pitch and play park being completed which caused operational issues for the development of the park. It would be more prudent to complete the play park first with the car park being used by the contractor, followed by the completion of the car park with the 3G pitch being completed sometime thereafter. There was also the possibility of external funding being made available to complete the path which had no direct relevance to the other aspects of the scheme.

The Head of Parks and Amenities advised that he would engage with Planning staff to see how matters might best be resolved to accommodate the anticipated works programme.

6.8 Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum
Councillor S Hughes

Councillor S Hughes wished to have his appreciation for the work that the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum staff have undertaken over the lockdown period recorded, in particular the digital VJ Day celebrations and the Swanzy Riots exhibition currently available online and he encouraged all Members to view the

6.8 Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum (cont.)
Councillor S Hughes

online exhibitions. Councillor Hughes welcomed the use of context for these exhibitions and looked forward to a similar approach being used to mark the 100th anniversary of the creation of NI next year.

6.9 Anti-Social Behaviour at Play Parks
Councillor D J Craig

Councillor D J Craig thanked the Head of Parks and Amenities for his assistance in dealing with anti-social behaviour at Lambeg Play Park by suggesting the installation of temporary CCTV which has reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and has encouraged families to use the play park again.

Councillor Craig advised that there had been an increase in anti-social incidents in the nearby Tom Robinson Park, including items being set on fire and that following discussions with the PCSP and PSNI it was agreed that one option to reduce these incidents would be to remove the hedgerows around the park and replace these with open fencing allowing people to look directly into the park and report cases of ASB when they are taking place. It was agreed that officers would bring back a report to the Committee examining the costs and feasibility of removing the hedgerows for further consideration.

6.10 Record of Thanks
The Chairman, Alderman M Henderson

The Chairman, Alderman M Henderson asked that his thanks to the Marketing and Communication team and the Leisure and Community Wellbeing team for all their work during the pandemic be recorded, including the work undertaken in relation the launch of exhibitions, recent outside theatre productions, and the painting by numbers project in nursing homes, as well as many other projects.

6.11 Development of the Council's Play Parks
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer

The Chairman advised that this item should be dealt with 'in Committee' and advised that the reason for confidentiality for this item was for the reason of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

"In Committee"

It was proposed by Councillor N Anderson, seconded by Councillor D J Craig and agreed that this item would be considered "In Committee", in the absence of members of the press and public being present.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer sought an update on the development of the Council's play parks and the Director provided a verbal update to the Committee. The Director advised that a tender process in respect of the refurbishment of a number of play parks and the development of several new ones

6.11 Development of the Council's Play Parks (cont.)
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Palmer

had been completed earlier in the year but for several reasons including the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic the process had been put on hold and ultimately abandoned. Tenders had subsequently been reissued but the returns received came in significantly over the budget allocated. The Director advised that legal advice has been received, and that on behalf of the Council the Director of Service Transformation in line with this advice has identified a way forward to engage with the tenderers and allow the procurement to be concluded. Following this, it is anticipated a tender report will be brought back to the Committee for further consideration.

During the discussion of this item, Members sought clarification on a number of issues which were responded to by the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing and the Chief Executive. Many Members expressed disappointment that there was a continuing delay in the development of these play parks. Councillor H Legge reminded Members that the play parks across the Council area were always of an excellent quality.

"Resumption of Normal Business"

It was proposed by Councillor H Legge, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business was resumed.

The Chairman, Alderman M Henderson thanked everyone for attending the meeting and thanked those who watching on the live stream. As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 8.07pm.

Mayor/Chairman