

## **LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Leisure and Community Development Committee held in the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, and remotely, on Tuesday 7th February 2023 at 6.00pm**

- PRESENT:** Councillor A McIntyre (Chairman);  
Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy;  
Aldermen A Grehan and Councillors N Anderson,  
R T Beckett, D J Craig, A Gowan, J Lavery BEM,  
H Legge and T Mitchell.
- PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION:** The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson;  
Alderman S Martin; and Councillors R Carlin, S Mulholland,  
Jenny Palmer and S Skillen.
- OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Alderman J Tinsley (Zoom); and Councillors A Givan  
(Zoom), C McCready, John Palmer (Zoom) and  
N Trimble (Zoom).
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing  
Head of Communities  
Head of Parks and Amenities  
Head of Sports Services  
Member Services Officers (BF and EW).

#### 1. Apology (2.05)

An apology was received from Alderman M Henderson.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Mario Scappaticci, Area Manager, Sports Services, to the meeting.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest (2.25)

Regarding item 3.1 re: 'Education Authority Northern Ireland', Councillor J Craig declared an interest in this matter in that he was a member of the Board of the aforementioned body. In relation to item 5.3, regarding the use of Wallace Park, Alderman A Grehan declared an interest in that the correspondence received by the Council was linked to a family relation.

#### 3. Report of Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing

##### 3.1 Education Authority Northern Ireland (EANI) (4.10)

(Councillor C McCready attended in connection with this item and Councillor J Craig retired from the meeting whilst it was under discussion).

The Chairman reminded the Committee that, at the meeting of the Council on 19th December, Councillor C McCready reported that he had been approached by a group from within the Moira area to express concern that its funding from the Education Authority Northern Ireland (EANI) would be cut significantly in 2023/24. Given that matters relating to education were

linked to Council's Community Planning function, the Council agreed that the issue be referred to that Committee for consideration.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor McCready advised the Committee that the group he had referred to at the meeting of the Council carried out vital community work within the Moira and the wider Downshire West electoral area. He said that the decision of EANI would impact greatly on that work. He therefore proposed that the Committee agree to write to EANI to request clarity on the criteria and grading system used in assessing funding applications.

(The Right Worshipful the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Alderman A Grehan and Councillors R Carlin and H Legge joined the meeting at 18:06; and Councillor N Trimble joined the meeting at 18:08).

Councillor S Mulholland concurred with the aforementioned sentiments and suggested, given the overall impact that the cuts would have on youth services, that it would be beneficial if a request be made to EANI to meet with an all-party deputation to discuss a range of wider issues. Councillor C McCready agreed to this course of action and noted that the specific case he had raised would be detailed within any correspondence forwarded to EANI.

(Alderman J Tinsley joined the meeting at 18:17).

The Committee, on the proposal of Councillor S Mulholland, which was seconded by Alderman A Grehan, agreed that a request be made to EANI to meet with an all-party deputation to discuss a range of issues regarding funding and youth services in the Council area.

The Director indicated that party group leaders would be consulted in respect of the deputation.

It was noted that Councillor N Anderson requested, as an independent Member of the Council, that consideration be given to including him as part of any deputation.

#### 4. Report of the Head of Communities

##### 4.1 Policing and Community Safety Partnership Minutes (29.30)

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the minutes of the private meeting of the PCSP of 15th November, together with the Policing Committee held on 15th November, 2022.

##### 4.2 Draft Good Relations Action Plan for 2023/24 (31.16)

The Head of Communities provided details on the key themes and progress to date on the existing Good Relations Action Plan 2022/23. Furthermore, she referred to the programmes which would be delivered through the revised action plan. She referred also to the changes within the plan, which included the provision for - and the delivery of - an enhanced programme to enable greater engagement with the community to address issues such as isolation; encouraging residents to get outdoors; the promotion of equality and relationship building; an extended schedule of cultural celebrations; and the continuation of funding through a reactionary fund for emerging issues.

On the proposal of Alderman A Grehan, which was seconded by Councillor N Anderson, the Committee approved the draft Good Relations Action Plan for 2023/24 and the associated budget for submission to the Executive Office.

#### 4.3 Support Funding Programme (36.14)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 6th December, it had agreed that officers would proceed to plan and co-design a bespoke framework to build capacity and infrastructure to assist asylum seekers and refugees in the Council area. In January, a Support Funding Programme had been launched which sought applications from community or voluntary organisations operating within the Council area to apply for awards between £5,000 and £7,000. The Head of Communities reminded the Committee that the Executive Office had indicated that a proportion of that funding was to be expended during the current financial year.

The Committee was informed that the application process had closed at 12:00 noon earlier that day and officers had assessed the applications during the afternoon. Accordingly, the Head of Communities gave an overview of the outcome of that process and reported that four organisations, as set out below, had been deemed eligible for the support outlined:

- Lisburn Community Trust - Lisburn South DEA - £6,000
- Resurgam Youth Initiative - Lisburn South DEA - £6,985
- Young Men's Christian Association - Lisburn South DEA - £5,530
- Advice NI (in partnership with CALC) - Lisburn South DEA - £6,850

In response to a question by Alderman A Grehan, the Head of Communities clarified that the successful groups would be invited to partake in a focus group as the next stage of the implementation process.

It was proposed by Councillor N Anderson and seconded by Councillor H Legge, and agreed that the Committee note the outcome of the application process and the associated funding awards and congratulate officers for the efficient manner in which they had processed the information for presentation to the Committee.

### 5. Report of the Head of Parks and Amenities

#### 5.1 Open Spaces (Green) Strategy 2022/26 (44.10)

The Head of Parks and Amenities spoke to a report which outlined the background to the development of the Open Spaces (Green) Strategy for 2022/26. He summarised the aims and objectives of the Strategy, which, he pointed out, would enable the Council to prioritise and improve areas of most need by using a reliable and up-to-date evidence base.

The key priority for the Strategy and its associated action plan would be to enable residents of the Council area to enjoy a range of attractive and accessible parks and open spaces. In addition, the Council's parks, greenspaces and play areas would provide places for social interaction, play, sport, recreation which would enhance wellbeing. He added that it was anticipated that existing open spaces would be protected and improved through the Strategy, which would diversify urban habitats and extend the current green network.

In response to a question from the Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy, the Head of Parks and Amenities provided clarity on the protection of open spaces within the Strategy and how it related to the Council's overall Local Development Plan. In addition, the Director undertook to convene a meeting of the Castlereagh South DEA Members' Forum to consider a number of issues within the DEA.

Other Members' comments were noted in relation to the provision of aids for the visually impaired; the preservation of sites of historical significance; and the prioritisation of individual schemes and how the Strategy linked into existing Council strategies.

The Committee, on the proposal Councillor N Anderson, which was seconded by Alderman A Grehan, approved the Strategy.

## 5.2 Twelfth Day Demonstrations – Infrastructure Support (1.00.25)

The Committee was informed that notification had been received from the District Secretary of Ballinderry District Orange Lodge advising that it would be hosting the annual Twelfth demonstration in Upper Ballinderry on 12th July, 2023. Within the correspondence, the District Secretary had requested that the Council provide infrastructure support at the event, similar to that which had been approved for Magheragall District Orange Lodge in 2022, and the Glenavy District Orange Lodge in 2019.

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed that Committee accede to the request, subject to notification to, and consideration by, the Council's Safety Advisory Group.

## 5.3 Use of Wallace Park - Lisburn Royal Black District Chapter No. 1 (1.01.00)

(Alderman A Grehan, who had declared an interest in this matter, retired from the meeting for its duration).

The Committee, on the proposal of Councillor A Gowan, which was seconded by Councillor N Anderson, granted the use of Wallace Park on Saturday 26th August to the Lisburn Royal Black District Chapter No. 1 for hosting of the County Antrim Grand Black Chapter 'Last Saturday' Demonstration. It was agreed also that infrastructure support, if required, be provided in support of the event and that the relevant byelaw be temporarily set aside to permit a religious service to take place.

## 5.4 Moira Presbyterian Church (1.02.44)

It was proposed by Councillor A Gowan, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed that the Committee grant approval to Moira Presbyterian Church to host a multi-denominational religious service at Moira Demesne on Easter Sunday, 9th April. It was agreed also that the relevant byelaw, regarding the hosting of religious services in parks and open spaces, be temporarily set aside for this purpose.

It was agreed further that requests of this nature would continue to be presented to the Committee for approval.

## 5.5 Tree and Woodland Strategy (1.11.25)

The Head of Parks and Amenities reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in December, Members had approved an Ash Dieback Action Plan and it had been indicated that an overarching Tree & Woodland Strategy would be presented for consideration. Accordingly, he outlined the principal aspects of the Strategy which aimed to support the Council's commitment to combatting climate change.

It was proposed by Councillor Jenny Palmer, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed that the Committee approve the Strategy and congratulate the Head of Parks and Amenities and his staff for the work which had been undertaken in the preparation of the document.

## 4. Report of the Head of Sports Services

### 6.1 Vitality Independent Evaluation (1.15.20)

(Councillor T Mitchell left the meeting at 19:25)

The Head of Sports Services outlined the main outcomes of an independent evaluation which had been undertaken on the on the Vitality Membership Scheme. He advised that the Committee that the evaluation had been carried out as part of the commitment to continuous improvement through feedback from customers. He added that the positive outcome of the evaluation would provide a framework for building upon and improving the overall product offered to customers.

In response to a matter raised by Councillor A Givan, in respect of Dundonald International Ice Bowl, particularly in the management of customer access and egress during busy times in the centre, the Head of Sports Services provided clarity and, in addition, he undertook to provide a more detailed response to Councillor A Givan in due course.

It was proposed by Councillor A Gowan, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed that the Committee note the outcome of the evaluation.

## 7.0 Any Other Business - Non-Confidential Matters

### 7.1 Verbal Abuse of Council Staff (1.23.38)

In response to a question by Councillor J Laverty, regarding instances of verbal abuse by members of the public towards staff within Council properties, the Head of Communities clarified that such behaviour was not tolerated and the Council had robust mechanisms in place to deal with unacceptable conduct should it occur.

### 7.2 Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (1.29.00)

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy, seconded by Alderman A Grehan, and agreed that consideration be given to hosting an event in the Lisburn Museum to mark the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in April, 1998.

7.3 Alderman S Martin (1.31.50)

- The Head of Parks and Amenities undertook to address an issue regarding a tree plaque in Castle Gardens.
- The Director undertook to examine the feasibility of hosting a reception to mark the 10th anniversary of the Wallace Park Fun Run and its association with the '5K Your Way' initiative which provided support for those impacted on by cancer.
- In response to a query regarding how the Council would mark the 30th anniversary of the Warrington bombing on 26th February, particularly given the long-standing links between the Council and Warrington Council, the Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor S Carson, indicated that correspondence had been received by the Mayor's office in this regard and that the matter would be followed-up.

7.4 NISRA Statistics (1.35.40)

It was noted that an update be provided to Councillor S Mulholland in respect of when it was anticipated that the 2021 NISRA statistics would be available for use within Council research, papers and reports.

7.4 Parking at Hydebank Playing Fields (1.36.28)

Councillor N Anderson referred to the ongoing parking problems which had been experienced at the above location. In response, the Head of Parks and Amenities indicated that he would discuss the matter further with the Director.

7.5 Yew Trees within Council Properties (1.38.50)

Further to a query raised previously in relation to the Tree and Woodland Strategy, Councillor Jenny Palmer outlined her concern regarding the dangers posed by Yew trees across Council parks, cemeteries and open spaces, and particularly to animals and children given the toxicity of their berries.

The Head of Parks and Amenities undertook to provide further information in this regard.

7.6 LeisurePlex (1.45.10)

In response to questions by Councillor C McCready, the Head of Sports Services undertook to provide updates in relation to two matters which were raised.

(Councillor C McCready left the meeting at 18:47).

8. Confidential Report of the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The Chairman advised that the reason for confidentiality for the following matters was by virtue of the Local Government Act (2014) Northern Ireland, i.e., 'information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed that the confidential report of the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing be considered 'in committee', in the absence of members of the press and public.

(Councillor A Givan left the meeting at 18:47).

#### 8.1 Pilot Acquisition & Disposal – Consideration of Pitches

The Committee agreed to approve the commencement of a pilot project regarding the provision of playing pitches, which would help inform the Council's Acquisition and Disposal Policy and approved the undertaking of an expression of interest exercise.

#### 8.2 Automatic Irrigation System for Bowling Greens – Tender Evaluation

Proposed by Alderman A Grehan,  
Seconded by Councillor J Lavery and

Resolved – that the Committee approve the tender evaluation report and note the award of contract for the above mentioned system.

#### 8.3 Green Waste Contractor – Tender Evaluation

Proposed by Alderman A Grehan,  
Seconded by Councillor J Lavery and

Resolved – that the Committee note award of contract for the above-mentioned equipment.

#### 8.4 Wallace Park Modular Gallery

Proposed by Councillor H Legge,  
Seconded by Councillor A Gowan and

Resolved – that the Committee note the award of tender for the above-mentioned development at Wallace Park.

#### 8.5 Annual Capital Fleet Replacement

Proposed by Councillor N Anderson,  
Seconded by Councillor H Legge and

Resolved – that the Committee approve the tender evaluation report and note the award of contract in respect of the above-mentioned tendering exercise.

#### 8.6 Hydebank Pavilion Refurbishment – Financial Appraisal

Proposed by Councillor N Anderson,  
Seconded by the Deputy Mayor Councillor M Guy and

Resolved – that the Committee approve the financial appraisal for the above-mentioned project to enable it to progress to tendering stage.

8.7 Belfast International Sports Club

Proposed by Councillor H Legge,  
Seconded by Councillor J Lavery and

Resolved – that the Committee approve the progression of an annually renewable licence agreement (or as advised by legal services) with the Belfast International Sports Club regarding its tenure of the cricket facility at the Billy Neill MBE Country Park.

8.8 Department for Communities - Financial Assistance

The Committee endorsed a proposed course of action which was outlined by the Director regarding correspondence which had been received from the Department for Communities.

It was agreed that a proposal would be sent to the Department for Communities by 10th February 2023. It was noted that, once further information and clarity had been provided that a report would be submitted for the Committee's consideration.

8.9 Seymour Hill Play Park

Councillor J Craig raised an issue regarding the upkeep of a play park in the Seymour Hill estate and the Head of Parks and Amenities provided clarity on the history and future maintenance of the site.

9. Resumption of Normal Business

It was proposed by Councillor J Lavery, seconded by Councillor A Gowan, and agreed that normal business be resumed.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 20:30.

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Chairman