

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Leisure and Community Development Committee held in the Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, and remotely, on Tuesday 5th April 2022 at 5:30pm

PRESENT: Councillor S Skillen (Chairperson)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman S Martin

Aldermen A Grehan and J Tinsley

Councillors N Anderson, D J Craig, A Gowan and A McIntyre.

PRESENT IN A REMOTE LOCATION: Deputy Mayor Councillor T Mitchell and Councillors R T Beckett, R Carlin, M Guy, Jenny Palmer, John Palmer and Hon N Trimble.

IN ATTENDANCE: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
 Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing
 Head of Communities
 Head of Parks and Amenities
 Head of Sports Services
 Member Services Officers (BF & EW)
 Technician
 IT Support

Commencement of Meeting

The Chairperson, Councillor S Skillen, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded attendees that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, unauthorised recording was not permitted. The Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing read the safety announcement and the Member Services Officer read out the names of the Elected Members and officers in attendance.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors D Honeyford and S Hughes.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

In respect of items 3.1 and 3.2, Community Support Grant Aid 2022/23 and Communities Festivals' Funding 2022/23, the Chairperson declared non-pecuniary interests in that she was a member of a sub-group of the Ballybeen Improvement Group, which had applied for funding under the schemes.

Councillor John Palmer declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 3.1, Community Support Grant Aid 2022/23, in that he was associated with Hillsborough Old Guard, which had applied for funding under the scheme.

Regarding item 3.4, Consultation Responses – Education Authority Northern Ireland, Councillor D J Craig declared a pecuniary interest in this matter as he was a member of the Board of the Education Authority.

3. Report of the Head of Communities

3.1 Community Support Grant Aid 2022/23

(The Chairperson, Councillor S Skillen, withdrew from the meeting whilst items 3.1 and 3.2 were under discussion. Councillor John Palmer withdrew from the meeting for item 3.1).

(The Deputy Chair, Councillor R T Beckett, in the Chair).

The Committee was reminded that applications for support under the Community Support Grant Aid scheme for 2022/23 had closed on 21st February. That programme formed part of the Council's overall Community Support Programme, which had been in receipt of financial assistance from the Department for Communities. The total amount had not, as yet, been confirmed by the Department for the current financial year, however, traditionally this had been in the region of £165,000 for that element of the programme.

The Head of Communities reported that 74 applications had been received and assessed by a panel against a pre-agreed criteria, in respect of which 71 had been deemed successful. She advised further of an amendment to the previously circulated report and appendix, in respect of the application received from Aghalee Village Hall, which had been in the sum of £5,500, and, therefore, would have an impact on the overall amounts outlined in the options presented in the paper.

Accordingly, the Head of Communities outlined three options for the Committee to consider, as amended, and set out below:

- option 1 - to fund all eligible applications based on their weighted score following assessment totalling £244,812, which would require an additional allocation of £79,812; or
- option 2 - to fund all eligible applications with a further weighting of their weighted allocation following assessment totalling £192,541, which would require an additional allocation of £27,541; or
- option 3 - to fund all eligible applications reduced by 32.4% of their weighted allocation in order to remain within the £165,493 budget.

The Committee was informed that, should it agree to adopt either option 1 or option 2, the additional financial contribution required would be sourced, as a one-off intervention, given the rise in living costs and recovery from the pandemic, from within the Covid-19 recovery funds allocated previously to the Council by the DfC.

A number of Members referred to the current adverse financial circumstances under which community groups operated, given the unprecedented rise in both fuel and utility costs. Members also articulated the challenges groups were facing due to the impact of Covid-19. As such, there was a consensus that the Committee should endorse the maximum level of support as proposed within option 1.

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor N Anderson, seconded by Councillor D J Craig, and agreed that the Committee adopt option 1 as set out within the report, in accordance with the course of action outlined by the Head of Communities.

3.2 Communities Festivals Funding 2022/23

(Councillor John Palmer returned to the meeting at this point).

The Head of Communities reminded the Committee that the Council and the Department for Communities (DfC) jointly-funded the above-mentioned fund. She added that DfC had, as yet, not issued letters of offer to councils since the budgetary allocations for 2022/23 had still to be agreed and finalised.

The scheme had been open for applications from 24th January to the 21st February, and it was reported that 27 applications had been received, all of which had been deemed eligible for support under the fund. The total amount requested was £82,075, which was £27,075 in excess of the Council's indicative budget of £55,000.

Accordingly, the Head of Communities outlined three options for the Committee to consider, as set out below:

- option 1 – to fund all eligible applications (without weighting) at the amount deemed eligible following assessment totalling £82,075, which would require an additional allocation of £27,075; or
- option 2 - to fund all eligible applications at their weighted allocation following assessment totalling £66,213.35, which would require an additional allocation of £11,213.35; or
- option 3 - to fund all eligible applications reduced by 17% of their weighted allocation in order to remain within the £55,000 budget.

The Committee was informed that, should it agree to adopt either option 1 or option 2, the additional financial contribution required, would be sourced, as a one-off intervention due to the rise in living costs and the impact of Covid-19, from within the Covid-19 recovery funds allocated previously to the Council by the DfC.

There was a consensus among Members that, given the unprecedented rise in both fuel and utility costs and the impact of Covid-19, the Committee should endorse the maximum level of support as proposed within option 1.

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed that the Committee adopt option 1 as set out within the report, subject to the course of action outlined by the Head of Communities.

3.3 Minutes of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group

(The Chairperson, Councillor S Skillen, in the Chair).

It was agreed that the Committee note the contents of the minutes of the Council's Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group of 9th February 2022.

3.4 Consultation Responses – Education Authority Northern Ireland (EANI)

(Councillor D J Craig left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion).

The Head of Communities outlined the principal aspects of two responses which had been drafted in response to the EANI's consultation exercises which sought views on the following two matters:

- Planning for Sustainable Provision: Draft Strategic Area Plan 2022/27; and
- Planning for Special Education Provision: Draft Strategic Area Plan 2022/27.

She indicated that the responses had emphasised a number of issues. In particular, the Council had highlighted the need for EANI to consider the wider use of schools' premises for community-based initiatives; the need also for a partnership approach to be adopted in the development of the plans; and the requirement for further clarity on the level of investment anticipated and its associated budget.

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor N Anderson, seconded by Councillor A Gowan, and agreed that the Committee endorse the consultation responses for their onward submission to the EANI in draft format, subject to Council ratification on 26th April.

It was noted that the draft responses would be amended to reflect the inclusion of comments, which had been made by Councillor N Anderson, regarding the requirement for the EANI to enhance remote learning opportunities for all children due to barriers to participation which had been evident during the pandemic, resulting in some children being left behind.

4. Report of the Head of Parks and Amenities

4.1 Request from City Centre Ministers' Group

(Councillor D J Craig returned to the meeting at this point).

The Head of Parks and Amenities reported that a request had been received from the above-mentioned organisation to hold a multi-denominational religious service/picnic in Wallace Park on a Sunday during the summer, on a date as yet to be identified. He added that, should the Committee accede to the request, it would be necessary that the relevant bye-law precluding the holding of religious ceremonies in Council parks be set aside for that purpose.

The Committee, on the proposal of Councillor N Anderson, which was seconded by Councillor A Gowan, agreed to accede to the request and agreed further that the relevant bye-law be set aside on this occasion to enable the service to take place.

(The Worshipful Mayor Alderman S Martin joined the meeting at 6:00pm).

5. Report of the Head of Sports Services

5.1 Dundonald International Ice Bowl – Request for the Use of the Ice Rink

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Hockey Education Reaching Out Society (Ireland) Programme seeking the use of the ice rink in Dundonald International Ice Bowl from 8th to 12th August inclusive.

The Head of Sports Services explained that the organisation sought to promote life skills and empower marginalised young persons through ice hockey and operated on a cross-community and cross-border basis. He reminded Members that the Council had approved the complimentary use of the ice rink for the organisation since 2007, but, given Covid-19 restrictions, the programme had not been held in 2020 and 2021. He pointed out that the request, if approved, would have a minimal impact on the existing programme at the site.

Accordingly, the Head of Sports Services recommended that the Committee approve the complimentary use of the ice rink on the dates outlined and he recommended further that authority be delegated to him to consider and any future requests received in this regard.

The Committee, on the proposal of Alderman A Grehan, which was seconded by Councillor N Anderson, agreed to adopt the recommendations of the Head of Sports Services.

6.0 Confidential Report of the Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

The Chairperson advised that the reasons for confidentiality were by virtue of the Local Government Act (2014) Northern Ireland, specifically for the reasons as set out in the agenda.

“In Committee”

It was proposed by Councillor DJ Craig, seconded by Councillor A Gowan, 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 being present.

(Councillor A Gowan left the meeting at 6:05pm).

6.1 Sam McBratney Digital Art and Literature Trail

(Report will not be unrestricted)

It was moved by Councillor N Anderson, seconded by Alderman J Tinsley, and agreed that the Committee note the outcome of the above-mentioned tendering exercise and award of contract, together with the comments by the Head of Communities thereon.

6.2 Dundonald International Ice Bowl – Temporary Closure and Maintenance

(Report to be made available following July Council meeting)

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed that Committee adopt the recommendation of the Head of Sports Services as outlined within his report.

6.3 Facility Closures and Changes to Operational Hours (LeisurePlex)
(Report will not be unrestricted)

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed that the Committee approve the recommendation of the Head of Sports Services in respect of the above-mentioned matter.

6.4 Sports Services Catering Contract – Update
(Report will not be unrestricted)

The Committee noted an update which was provided by the Director in respect of the above-mentioned matter and noted further that a report in this regard would be submitted in due course for consideration.

(Councillor M Guy left the meeting at 06:15pm).

6.5 Antisocial Behaviour at Tom Robinson Park

In response to a query which was raised by Councillor D J Craig, the Head of Parks and Amenities gave an update on the steps being taken to address antisocial behaviour at the above-mentioned site. The Director undertook to follow the matter up through the Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

6.6 Grove Activity Centre

Alderman A Grehan placed on the record several queries and requested updates in relation to the pilot community asset transfer process at the above-mentioned centre. In particular, she sought clarity on the engagement process and the projected timescales for the completion of the transfer.

In response, the Director and the Head of Sports Services provided updates and it was noted that a report would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

6.7 Commonwealth Games 2022

The Committee noted the comments of Head of Sports Services in relation to the Council area being used as a training base for teams competing at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

“Resumption of Normal Business”

It was proposed by Councillor D J Craig, seconded by Councillor N Anderson, and agreed to come out of Committee and normal business be resumed.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Magheragall District LOL – Infrastructure Support

Alderman J Tinsley reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 7th January, 2020, it had agreed to provide infrastructure support to the Magheragall District Orange Lodge in

the hosting of the 2020 12th July celebrations, together with the annual parish church event in Magheragall. He pointed out that both events had been cancelled due to the pandemic, and requested that the support as agreed previously be provided in 2022.

The Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 7th January, 2020, and agreed that the Council provide infrastructure support for both events as outlined.

7.2 St Patrick's Day Civic Events

Councillor N Anderson placed on the record his thanks to the Council's Museum Team for the work which they had undertaken in the delivery of the St Patrick's Day events.

7.3 Hillsborough Community Fun Day and Jubilee Church Services

Councillor John Palmer placed on the record his thanks to the Head of Parks and Amenities and his staff for the work which had been undertaken in relation to the Hillsborough Community Fun Day. In addition, the Head of Communities clarified a matter relating to the hosting of church services in Hillsborough on 3rd June, 2022.

7.4. Mr Mike Hannon

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman S Martin, informed the Committee that Mr Mike Hannon had been made honorary freeman by Warrington Council. He referred to Mr Hannon's term as Mayor of Warrington in 1994/95, when he had established a number of relationships which had focused on peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, in particular with Crewe United FC and the then Lisburn Borough Council.

7.5 Mr Bede Corry

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman S Martin, referred also to an event he had attended earlier that day at the Lisburn Museum, which had been attended by Mr Bede Corry, the New Zealand High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. The Mayor placed on the record his thanks to the Council's Museum Team who had ensured that the event had proved to be a success.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6:45pm.

Mayor/Chairperson