

**RECONVENED LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
(12th DECEMBER 2017)**

TUESDAY 9th JANUARY 2018

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RECONVENED LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
(12th DECEMBER 2017)
CIVIC HEADQUARTERS, ON
TUESDAY 9th JANUARY 2018 AT 7:00 PM

In the Chair: Councillor Duddy

Members Present: Alderman Hillis, Robinson
Councillors Baird, Chivers, Clarke, Deighan,
Holmes, MA McKillop, McLean, Stevenson, C
McShane, Mulholland

In Attendance: Councillor P McShane
Councillor Wilson

Officers Present: R Baker, Director of Leisure and Development
P Beattie, Head of Prosperity and Place
M Edgar, Cultural Services Manager
J Gray, SIB Project Manager
N Harkness, SIB Project Manager
W McCullough, Head of Sport and Wellbeing
P Thompson, Head of Tourism & Recreation
J Welsh, Head of Community & Culture
S Duggan, Committee & Member Services Officer

In Attendance: Press (1 no.)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies recorded.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. DUNLUCE CENTRE, PORTRUSH (COUNCILLOR CLARKE)

What cost liabilities have been incurred by Council in respect of the vacant Dunluce Centre since Council agreed its disposal 14 months ago?

The Director of Leisure and Development advised cost liabilities of £21,000 to include estates maintenance staff, building maintenance, rates, insurance and valuation.

4. WATERWORLD (COUNCILLOR CLARKE)

Waterworld was agreed for disposal by Council 12 months ago. What steps have been taken to progress the sale and what was the net cost of operating the facility in the 2017 season?

The Director of Leisure and Development updated Committee, an initial soft market testing valuation of the site was required to be revised, in preparation to progress with the disposal of the site.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing informed committee the net cost for operating Waterworld for the 2017 Season was projected to be £107,267.

Councillor Holmes sought further information on Waterworld's income, throughput and promotional activities.

The Head of Sport and Wellbeing stated a decrease in income of approximately 10% from previous year down circa 2,000 visitors. Waterworld's marketing for the year 2017 reflected what had been done in previous years and provided detail in relation to the following activities:

- Leaflet Drop
- Primary Times Advert
- All schools contacted in May to seek/offer group usage trips for June.
- Local Events adverts
- Adverts placed in Local Publications
- Press Release Posted to Council Facebook
- Council's Facebook page was used as the main communication point.

During consideration of the matter, the Chair observed that Councillor Wilson was in attendance as a non-committee member and queried of Councillor Wilson, whether he had communicated to the Chair, Chief Executive and Chief Officer prior to the meeting of his substitution at the meeting.

Councillor Wilson declared he was substituting for Councillor McCandless and the substitution had not been communicated.

The Chair advised that in light of this, Councillor Wilson could not substitute. Councillor Wilson agreed with the direction given.

Councillor Clarke commented whether there was a further expectation the ratepayer would continue to cover the cost of the wet play facility for the 2018 season.

The Director of Leisure and Development stated Waterworld would operate for 2018 subject to Council's agreement.

5. DFC CUTS (COUNCILLOR DUDDY)

What impact will 4%, 8%, or 12% cuts, have on Council's Grant Funding programme, if DfC implement such cuts as are being predicted?

The impact on staff whose wages are subsidised through DfC funding?

Considering Council are the administrator of grants on behalf of DfC; have any discussions been held with DfC regarding possible cuts?

If so has any consideration been given to how Council will manage any shortfall?

Has any consideration been given to, how this will be communicated, to Community Groups?

If the cuts exceed 12% what value will Council's contribution have on the community? (Will the groups be able to continue with their proposed plans/programme).

The Head of Community and Culture responded to each question submitted as follows:

- What impact will 4%, 8%, or 12% cuts, have on Council's Grant Funding programme, if DfC implement such cuts as are being predicted?

The impact on staff whose wages are subsidised through DfC funding?

The Head of VCU (Voluntary & Community Unit), Peter Toner had previously met with The Head of Service for Community & Culture and the Community Development Manager. Any cuts are unconfirmed in writing at this point but he had verbally discussed that it *could* be as much as 20% as the Department may in fact protect other community programmes they support. This could equate to approx. £46,000 deficit should Council wanted to fund groups to last year's level). This the reason that the funding scheme for Community Development and Social Inclusion Fund have been put on hold until February, while the others within Council are out for application at present.

In 2017/18 the Community Development section supported 49 grants for community group running costs/overheads and a further 35 grants for

Social Inclusion grants for voluntary sector groups providing much needed activities for socially excluded groups, including S75 groups. These grants supported involvement of 2,087 volunteers

In addition to the £110,000 awarded from Council these organisations were supported through skills building, advice and grant aid from Council's Community Support Programme to generate £1,436,068 in other income

- The impact on staff whose wages are subsidised through DfC funding?

The offer from DfC was for £232,700 last year. £106,510 of this is ring-fenced by the Department for advice services. As per the rest of Council budgets, fixed costs such as staff overheads are prioritised. The only avenue for savings/cuts therefore are to grants. Grant levels will be severely impacted should the Department impose these levels of cuts. With Council's requirement at this point to find an additional 2.5% saving, this could have an impact in real terms of up to 44% cut should these levels of cuts be applied.

- Considering Council are the administrator of grants on behalf of DfC; have any discussions been held with DfC regarding possible cuts?

Officers have discussed these issues with the Head of VCU and explained that a significant proportion of the overall budget is provided to the community and voluntary groups as grant aid and towards local voluntary sector advice service providers to deliver front line voluntary advice services. Additionally officers met with DfC Economists in November, who are undertaking an evaluation of the Community Support programme on behalf of the Department. These discussions included consideration of the needs the programme was addressing, its impacts and its value for money. This will feed into the overall evaluation and future direction of the programme. Officers reiterated the impact in terms of loss to voluntary sector infrastructure by the possibility of such drastic cuts by the Department. Feedback from the economists in terms of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's approach to supporting the sector was positive.

The Community Support Programme monies from the Department are integral in terms of sustaining local voluntary activity within the Borough. In 2017/18 the Community Development section supported 49 grants for community group running costs/overheads and a further 35 grants for Social Inclusion grants for voluntary sector groups providing much needed activities for socially excluded groups, including S75 groups.

- If so has any consideration been given to how Council will manage any shortfall?

The Head of Service for Community & Culture has raised this matter through budget setting meetings with senior staff. There is no additional budget within Community & Culture to absorb any potential losses. Should Council wish to continue to support this level of grant aid

intervention to groups, additional budget may have to be set aside as a contingency by the Council to cover the potential deficit, in the event that the Department impose these cuts.

- Has any consideration been given to, how this will be communicated, to Community Groups?

Officers have attended the grant funding roadshows and have indicated to groups that grant levels are at this point unconfirmed and that as such the programmes will be held for applications at this time – as per Funding Unit update at the October L&D meeting.

Should the Department cut funds and no additional resources be found from Council budgets, groups will be corresponded with as soon as is possible to notify them of same, advising a substantially reduced funding programme.

- If the cuts exceed 12% what value will Council's contribution have on the community? (Will the groups be able to continue with their proposed plans/programme).

Staff are working on the possibility of a 20% cut, grant aid could be reduced by 44%, leaving a grant pot of £61,000.

Many groups rely significantly on a £2000 contribution to operating costs of their groups. For small voluntary operated groups this may mean that the range of activities currently in place within their communities will be impacted by the loss of these funding programmes.

Councillor C McShane requested that the Councillors were circulated with the detailed responses given.

* **Councillor C McShane arrived at the meeting at 7.10 PM during consideration of the above matter.**

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.25PM.

Chair