

ARDS BOROUGH COUNCIL

A special meeting of the Council Services Committee was held in the Boardroom, 2 Church Street, Newtownards on Wednesday, 1 April 2009 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

In the Chair: Councillor Elliot

Aldermen: Craig
Gibson (7.01pm)
McCarthy
Shannon

Councillors: Bell (7.05pm) Magill
Boyle (7.05pm) McBriar
Carson McDowell (7.01pm)
Drysdale McIlveen
Fletcher Montgomery
S Hamilton Oswald
T Hamilton (7.06pm) Williams

In Attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Leisure Services, Manager Leisure Ards, Project Officer & Senior Committee Administrator

Apologies: Alderman Ennis
Councillors Ferguson, Gregory & Smyth

CONDOLENCES

It was **AGREED**, on the proposal of Alderman Shannon, seconded by Councillor Drysdale, that the Council writes to Councillor Ferguson conveying its sympathy following the sudden death of his sister.

(Alderman Gibson & Councillor McDowell entered the meeting at this stage – 7.01 p.m.)

CG 9046D

STAND ALONE STADIUM AT PORTAFERRY ROAD, NEWTOWNARDS (INCORPORATING REDEVELOPMENT OF LONDONDERRY PARK)

(Deferred from Council Services Committee on 18 March 2009)

Report dated 24 March 2009 (copy previously circulated) was tabled from the Director of Leisure Services stating that members would recall the decision taken in November 2008 which required officers to prepare a report which would provide:-

- An accurate estimate of the cost of building a stand alone stadium at the above location.
- An economic appraisal and needs analysis of same to address existing provision and level of use cost benefit analysis, financial viability and long term sustainability.
- The cost of developing Londonderry Park to the standard envisaged by officers for the Places For Sport (Surfaces) Programme and the incremental cost of further development to accommodate, respectively, intermediate and senior soccer.

Given the efforts required to develop such a report in the short time available, Strategic Leisure, was engaged to address the Stand Alone Stadium elements. Estimates for the incremental development of Londonderry Park had been prepared by engineers Scott Wilson with whom the writer had been working in relation to this project.

It was important for members to note that the Stand Alone analysis had been carried out in the context of the Londonderry Park development having been carried out.

Detailed reports had now been received and were furnished to members for their information.

The following summarised the findings:-

- 1 Stand Alone Stadium
 - (I) The estimated cost of constructing a 4,000 capacity stadium had been confirmed as £3,825,000 (excluding professional fees).
 - (II) Based on the capital cost, depreciation and maintenance costs and anticipated income an annual deficit in excess of £250,000 should be expected (report section 3).
 - (III) Sustainability modelling indicated a growing deficit year on year (report section 3).
 - (IV) Aside from sporting use, the additional use to which such a facility might be put was considered to be limited (report section 2 paras 2.26 – 2.28).
 - (V) Considered alongside the proposed development of Londonderry Park the Stand Alone project would represent an over provision of synthetic surfaces in the Borough (section 2 para 2.19).
- 2 Development of Londonderry Park

Members were aware that the project embraced more than the provision of an “arena” type facility. The project was aimed at establishing a centre of excellence for a number of sports and would be the subject of a grant application in due course. The project would include:-

- 2 x 3G Soccer pitches
- 1 x Sand filled hockey pitch
- 1 x New cricket square
- 1 x 70m x 30m Training area
- Improvements to grass pitch no 5
- Improved floodlighting (500 Lux)
- Additional car parking

For the purpose of the report three options were presented:-

- Community option only
- Option to cater for Intermediate Soccer
- Option to cater for Senior Soccer (at basic level)

The associated cost estimates were as set out in the report. All figures excluded fees but included 20% contingency:-

- Community option **£2,959,378**
(of which Arena £537,605)
- Intermediate Soccer option **£3,627,054**
(of which Arena £1,033,005)
- Senior Soccer option **£4,641,837**
(of which Arena £1,209,305)

Members were asked to note that the value attributed to the “Arena” pitch was shown for each of the above options. The incremental increases were attributable to the following:-

- **From Community to Intermediate**
 - Spectator Accommodation
 - Pavilion
- **From Intermediate to Senior options**
 - Further spectator accommodation
 - Car parking

Members were reminded that, in the view of officers, the Stand Alone Stadium should not be regarded as an alternative to the development of Londonderry Park. The latter project had its roots in the community and would provide a range of improvements to be enjoyed by soccer, hockey and cricket clubs. It followed therefore, that a cost comparison should not be made directly. Since the development of a Stand Alone Stadium was to provide a home for the local professional club the appropriate comparison was between the cost of accommodating Ards FC in Londonderry Park on the one hand and, on the other, the cost of providing the community-only option plus the cost of providing the Stand Alone Stadium. Expressed in cost terms this was as follows:

Accommodate Ards FC at Londonderry Park at
Intermediate level **£3,627,054**

OR

Accommodate Ards FC at Londonderry Park at
Senior level **£4,641,837**

OR

Construct Stand Alone Stadium and develop Londonderry
Park to Community only option
£6,784,378

(i.e. £2,959,378 & £3,825,000)

Regardless of the ultimate solution as to how best to accommodate Ards FC, officers would continue to develop the bid for funding in relation to the development of Londonderry Park. Given the arguments presented above and taking into account the attractiveness of having an arena pitch with at least limited covered accommodation it was **recommended** that the Council adopts the "Intermediate" model and develops a funding bid accordingly. The "Intermediate" model would accommodate Ards FC at its current level.

The Director of Leisure Services then gave members a presentation illustrating the Londonderry Park of the future. Two plans were shown – one illustrating the Intermediate model and the other the Senior model. He showed the location of each of the facilities, including car parking. He also demonstrated the proposed covered seating options.

(Councillors Bell & Boyle entered the meeting at this stage –
7.05 p.m.)

Members were then invited to raise any queries and the following comments were made as a result:-

(Councillor McIlveen left the meeting at this stage – 7.06 p.m.
Councillor T Hamilton entered the meeting)

- There would be a series of footpaths leading from the car parking facilities to the different pitches. The entrance to the car park would be from the Portaferry Road.
- The Director of Leisure Services confirmed that it was not possible to have multi-use pitches. For instance third generation pitches were not suitable for hockey and the notion of multi-use pitches presented difficulties in respect of lining. He informed members that sporting bodies were currently trying to develop a pitch for the three main ball games. The pitches within the proposal had been configured for soccer.
- Although the recommendation contained within the report was for the Council to provide an Intermediate facility discussions had taken place with the engineers to establish if this would be suitable for Ards Football Club (Ards FC), if it achieved senior status.
- The Director of Leisure Services stated that the project could be 'future proofed', should Ards FC achieve senior status. This would include improved officials accommodation. It was noted that additional turnstiles could be provided at a later date.
- The Director of Leisure Services stated that he was keen for the pitches to be used as much as possible, two to three times a day, seven days a week. This could only be achieved with 3G pitches, as grass pitches could not sustain that level of usage.
- It was noted that the IFA permitted the use of artificial surfaces as long as they met the FIFA standard.
- Consideration would be given to the possible future proofing of the pavilion, to ensure that adequate facilities, including toilets were provided.
- It was noted that officials' accommodation should be 3 square metres for Intermediate football and 9 square metres for Senior football. It was suggested that 9 square metres facilities be provided at this stage.
- It was noted that 3G pitches were in place in Cookstown and being used by a Club which competed in the same league as Ards FC.

(Councillor Magill entered the meeting at this stage – 7.20 p.m.)

- The Director of Leisure Services explained that the report examined two options– a Stand Alone Stadium and the Development of Londonderry Park, as requested by the Council. He stressed that his recommendation was for the Intermediate model, which included a stadium for community use.
- The Director of Leisure Services stated that he had met with many clubs who were content with the technical specification of the proposed facilities. He commented that 3G pitches were preferable for training purposes and that clubs were fully aware of the limitations of a grass surface.
- A query was raised about the position of the pitches. The Director of Leisure Services confirmed that the new pitches were to be in the same location as current pitches and that he had never received any complaints regarding the sunlight.
- The Director of Leisure Services reported that he had met with representatives from the 'Bring Ards Home' campaign the previous week, who had been very content with the plans he had shown them and the technical specification. He stressed that Ards FC had not sought a meeting with him nor had held any discussions.
- Members were reminded that the facility was being designed by experts and that it was fully compliant with IFA standards.
- The Director of Leisure Services commented that the project was dependent on the success of a grant application. It was noted that up to 90% grant aid was achievable, however for the purposes of the report a grant of 50% had been assumed. It was noted that there would be additional costs if the Council, at a later stage, decide to upgrade the facilities from Intermediate to Senior level. Members were informed however that grants were available from Sport NI for clubs for such works.

That concluded the questions.

Mrs Fowler, Strategic Leisure, then gave members a presentation on the options for Londonderry Park.

Stand Alone Stadium

Context

- New indoor sports leisure centre – Dairy Hall.
- New outdoor facilities – Londonderry Park (Places for Sport Bid).

Scope of Report

The scope of the study was as follows:

- Construct a needs analysis for the proposed stadium.
- Produce an accurate estimate of costs to construct a stand alone stadium at Portaferry Road, Newtownards which complied with Irish Premier League requirements.
- Conduct an economic appraisal.

The economic appraisal addressed the following:

- The current provision of football facilities in the Borough, their current cost, levels of use and the identification of the teams or communities that used them.
- A cost benefit analysis of the proposed project.
- An examination of how the proposed project would specifically address the identified needs of the football teams and other sports clubs as well as the wider Ards Borough community.
- The financial viability of the proposal together with projected levels of use and the cost recovery; and a projection of its long term sustainability.

Swot Analysis

Strengths and weaknesses of Stand Alone Stadium

Strengths	Weaknesses
The provision of a state of the art stadium in the Borough	The assessment of need did not support provision of a 6 th STP in the Borough
A home for Ards FC	The stadium would require a large ongoing revenue subsidy from the Council
Suitable ancillary facilities with the capacity for competitive and community use	The facility would likely have a detrimental impact on income at the Council's other STPs
A large available site which would easily be able to accommodate a stadium and the required parking	A large capital outlay for the Council of £4.39 million

Swot Analysis

Strengths and weaknesses of an alternative scheme at Londonderry Park

Strengths	Weaknesses
The provision of a stadia in the Borough which met Irish Premier League criteria	Did not meet the full aspirations of Ards FC
The Council already planned to provide two 3G pitches at the site so there was only additional capital outlay required for the stadia elements	The stadium would require a reasonably large ongoing revenue subsidy from the Council (if taking repayment of capital into account)
Suitable ancillary facilities with the capacity for competitive and community use	Would potentially reduce the number of grass pitches at Londonderry Park, which may have planning implications
The facility would be at the heart of a community hub facility in Londonderry Park and thus be more accessible for the community	Potential issues providing adequate parking
A home for Ards FC	
Allowed extension of stadia to increase capacity if required in the future	

Report Conclusions

- Assessment of Need - did not support a stand alone stadium.
 - Too many STPs
 - Insufficient additional use
- Financial Assessment - capital cost £4.39m ongoing revenue contribution.

In conclusion, Mrs Fowler stated that an Integrated Facility Development was the better option.

Members were then invited to raise any queries and the following comments were made as a result:-

- The Director of Leisure Services stated that should the bid for funding be unsuccessful this would be reported to Council which could take whatever action it deemed necessary. The Chief Executive reminded members that even if the bid was successful in achieving 90% funding the Council would still have to find in the region of £360,000.

- Concern was expressed by one member that the Council intended to spend in excess of £600,000 to provide a stadium and, in his view, a home for Ards FC. The Director of Leisure Services stressed that his recommendation was for the Intermediate Model. He acknowledged that he had noted within his recommendation that the model would accommodate Ards FC at its current level – more as a statement of fact and for members' information. It was noted that there were three other Intermediate clubs in the Borough. (The member felt reference to Ards FC should not have been included within the recommendation.)
- It was noted that Ards FC would be asked to pay more when hiring the facility and that it would be available for other clubs when not in use.
- The stadium could be used for international events such as the Youth International match recently played in Comber.
- It was noted that a stand alone stadium would cost in the region of £4.39 million. In addition the Council would be contributing to the Londonderry Park facility, the level of which would depend on the grant aid achieved. Therefore a stand alone stadium and the Londonderry Park development would result in two capital costs. The recommendation however represented one capital development.
- In respect of financial queries, members were referred to the report from the Director of Corporate Services which indicated the cost of development to be £3.6 million, dependent on 50% grant aid, which would result in a capital cost to the Council of £1.8 million. This would result in an annual impact on the rates of £35,000 or 0.24%. It was noted that there would be lost investment income to the Council which needed to be factored in. (One member commented that the level of provision for the expenditure indicated was very attractive.)
- Mrs Fowler stated that the Intermediate option was a 'win win' situation for the Council. She explained that if the Council built a stand alone stadium at Londonderry Park it would be over providing on one site and that the facilities would be competing against one another.

Alderman Shannon proposed, seconded by Councillor S Hamilton, the Council accepts the report and recommendation and asks that match officials' facilities be future proofed.

(Councillor Boyle left the meeting at this stage – 8.02 p.m.)

Concern was expressed at the wording of the recommendation “Regardless of the ultimate solution as to how best to accommodate Ards FC, officers would continue to develop the bid for funding in relation to the development of Londonderry Park. Given the arguments presented above and taking into account the attractiveness of having an arena pitch with at least limited covered accommodation it was **recommended** that the Council adopts the “Intermediate” model and develops a funding bid accordingly. The “Intermediate” model would accommodate Ards FC at its current level.”

The Chief Executive stated that the Director of Leisure Services had merely made a statement of fact, reminding members that the Council had asked officers to investigate the possibility of providing a stadium capable of hosting Ards FC. He added that the recommendation was adequate and that the preamble explained the context.

The proposer welcomed the report and the recommendation contained therein for an Intermediate community facility. He requested that the match officials’ facilities be future proofed at this stage, as it would be more cost effective. He added that funding would be available in the future from DCAL for football clubs should upgrade works be required. In conclusion, he stated that this was a fantastic opportunity to develop Londonderry Park and provide IFA standard pitches to be used by all clubs within the Borough.

The seconder also referred to the concentration of many members on Ards FC. He stated that he would be unable to support the recommendation if he did not believe that the facility was genuinely intended for the entire community. He referred to the multi-use facility which would accommodate many sports adding that it would be considered as a centre of sporting excellence. He expressed the hope that the Council would be successful in its funding bid, which would hopefully reduce the level of outlay required by the Council.

The next speaker stated it was clear from the report that a stand alone stadium could not be justified, however he believed the Intermediate model was ideal and would provide high level facilities for all sports. The Intermediate model could also be upgraded at a later date, if required, and could also be future proofed.

Councillor Williams stated that while he supported the provision of community facilities to be used by all he was concerned at the wording of the recommendation which referred to Ards FC. He stated for that reason he would vote against the proposal as he

felt it would result in headlines in the Chronicle reading "Ards FC Comes Home".

Continuing, he stated that many members had previously opposed providing a stadium for Ards FC, however were now supportive of it. He stated that if the reference remained within the recommendation that he would be unable to vote for the proposal. He also made reference to the fact that one member, who appeared to be pushing the recommendation, had previously declared an interest and left the Chamber during discussion on Ards FC.

In response to a query, the Chief Executive stressed that the minutes of this meeting were confidential and would not appear in the press until adopted. He added that he would be very disappointed to learn of an article in the press until after the Council meeting in April.

A further member welcomed the development of a complex of pitches which were being provided for community use. He also expressed the hope that the grant aid would be higher than currently assumed, adding that no doubt the Director would report back should figures alter. He also welcomed the fact that senior football could be accommodated in the future, if required, adding that the Council should not 'shy away' from this. He reminded members that 2011 and the RPA was looming and that the development of Londonderry Park would leave a legacy for the people of the Borough.

Another member expressed the opinion that Ards FC supporters would have to embrace the fact that the facility was not solely for their use and was a community facility to be used by all clubs within the Borough. He stated that Londonderry Park was currently well used and he was delighted to see many children and young people using the facilities in the evenings. He commented that income from Ards FC was likely to be higher than from any other club and therefore they should receive pre-eminence at the facility. He thanked the officers and Strategic Leisure for their hard work in this regard.

Alderman Craig then rose to inform members that she was no longer a shareholder of Ards FC and therefore had no conflict of interest.

The Director of Leisure Services informed members he had no discussions to date with Ards FC concerning its use of the facility, however he was aware of the general level of fees it paid at other facilities.

The next speaker queried why reference had been made to the club in the recommendation if no discussions had taken place with the club to date. He welcomed the fact that the Intermediate model had been selected, which would meet the needs of the community but urged caution however that if it appeared as though the Council had provided a facility for Ards FC that requests could be received from local clubs in other sports.

One member queried if the recommendation had been equality proofed.

The Chief Executive stated that he was content with the recommendation and that there should be no problems in respect of equality.

The proposal was read aloud to members and it was noted that it included no reference to Ards FC.

It was therefore **AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Alderman Shannon, seconded by Councillor S Hamilton, with 17 voting For and nil voting Against, **THAT** the Council accepts the report and recommendation and asks that match officials' facilities be future proofed.

Alderman Shannon having requested a Recorded Vote, the voting was as follows:-

FOR	AGAINST
Aldermen	Nil
Craig	
Gibson	
McCarthy	
Shannon	
Councillors	
Bell	
Carson	
Drysdale	
Elliot	
Fletcher	
S Hamilton	
T Hamilton	
Magill	
McBriar	
McDowell	
Montgomery	
Oswald	
Williams	

(Alderman McCarthy left the meeting at this stage – 8.35 p.m.)

CG 9046

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE OPERATION OF COMBER LEISURE CENTRE & PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES (Deferred from Council Services Committee on 18 March 2009)

(Councillor Williams left the meeting at this stage – 8.36 p.m.)

Report dated 25 March 2009 (copy previously circulated) was tabled from the Director of Leisure Services stating that as members would recall the report to the Council Services Committee in October 2008 outlined four options for the future development/use of Comber Leisure Centre. The options presented at that time were:-

- Internal refurbishment of the leisure centre (estimated cost £500,00)
- Construction of a new leisure centre at Parkway (estimated cost £9,000,000)
- Reduction in the opening hours at the existing facility
- Operate the centre as a community centre with fitness suite.

Consultants, Strategic Leisure, had been engaged to examine the business case for each option and had considered a further option which would represent a significant extension to the facility on its present site.

A detailed report had been received and was furnished to members for their information.

A description of the development options contained in section 3 of the report were summarised as follows:-

Option 1 Refurbishment

Capital Cost	£350k - £1m depending on scope
Revenue benefit	340k

Option 2 Construction of new leisure centre

Capital Cost	£9m
Revenue benefit	Savings on cost and increased income, but insufficient to justify a spend of £9m

Option 3 Reduction of opening hours

Capital Cost	Nil
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Revenue benefit £80 – 100k PA

Option 4 Operate as a Community Centre with fitness Suite

Capital Cost Nil

Revenue benefit Nil

The options appraisal at Para 3.17 outlined the strengths and weakness of each of the above options and identified a recommended option which was to carry out a refurbishment.

Section 4 of the report addressed a number of sub options which were as follows:-

1 Basic Refurbishment

- Replacement of synthetic pitch
- Replace Sport Hall floor
- Refurbish social areas and changing rooms
- Removal of health suite

Estimated total capital cost	£350,000
Equivalent annual loan charge	£45,000
Income growth	£48,000
Overall benefit P/A	£3,000

2 Standard refurbishment and expansion of fitness suite on two levels by removing health suite and relocating offices

- Replacement of synthetic pitch
- Replace Sports Hall floor
- Refurbish social areas and changing
- Removal of health suite, relocation of offices and extension of gym

Estimated total capital cost	£600,000
Equivalent annual loan charge	£77,000
Income growth	£100,000
Overall benefit P/A	£23,000

3 Conversion of Minor Hall into fitness suite

- Replacement of synthetic pitch
- Sports Hall floor replaced
- Refurbish social and changing areas
- Conversion of existing fitness suite to soft play/gymnastics

- Relocation of offices

Estimated total capital cost	£1,200,000
Equivalent annual loan charge	£113,000
Income growth	£130,000
Overall benefit P/A	£17,000

4 Extensive Refurbishment involving an extension of the building

Estimated total capital cost	£1,975,000
Equivalent annual loan charge	£186,000
Income growth	£160,000
Overall benefit P/A	(£26,000)

Section 5 of the report contained the consultants recommendations.

Should the Council wish to make changes to the operation and fabric of Comber Leisure Centre it was **recommended** that option 1 (refurbishment) and sub option 2 (standard refurbishment) be undertaken.

Councillor Oswald proposed, seconded by Alderman Craig, that the item be deferred to allow officers to carry out further appraisal of Option 3.

The proposer stated that while he saw no problem with Option 2, he believed that further consideration of Option 3 was required. He continued that he had recently visited the facility and felt that improvements could be made and space better utilised.

He acknowledged that the centre competed with the likes of David Lloyd and the La Mon Hotel, and he expressed the view that separate changing facilities for gym users would be a huge improvement.

He stated that he would be happy to meet members on site to discuss the matter.

A further member stated that he had recently visited the Centre and that he had been shocked at how cramped the gym facilities were. He stated that while the Council had much competition in the area, the Manager had indicated that due to the current economic climate many customers were returning to Council facilities, as they were more keenly priced. He added that surprisingly many of its customers did not live locally.

It was **AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Councillor Oswald, seconded by Alderman Craig, **THAT** the item be deferred to allow officers to carry out further appraisal of Option 3 and that a site meeting be held at the centre in the interim.

OS 11321/
CG 10452

**PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN
NEWTOWNARDS - EAST END & SCRABO ESTATE**
(Deferred from Council Services Committee on 18 March 2009)

Report dated 24 March 2009 (copy previously circulated) was tabled from the Director of Leisure Services stating that the Council had received representation from both The East End Residents Association and The Scrabo Residents Association in respect of the future provision of community facilities in these areas. A needs analysis had been commissioned and was furnished to members.

It was **recommended** that, if the Council could afford the capital investment, then the provision of these facilities could be justified on social grounds. It was expected that the combined capital cost would be in the region of £1.4m and that an ongoing combined operational deficit of £35,000 – 40,000 would arise.

General Note on Developments at Londonderry Park

Should the Council decide to provide a community centre at Londonderry Park it would be one of a possible four separate projects in a single location. (Pitches development, Play Area, Community Centre and Gymnastics Facility).

Members were aware that a funding application in respect of the pitches project was in the course of preparation. Should the Council be successful in securing grant funding it was highly likely that adherence to a strict timetable would be required.

In order to cater for that eventuality a Planning Application was being prepared and would be submitted at the earliest opportunity. This would not include the Community Centre or the Gymnastics Facility. To include these facilities in the Planning Application would delay approval for the pitches project and potentially impact the grant funding. It was **recommended** therefore, that a planning application for the Community Centre be dealt with separately and at an appropriate time.

Alderman Shannon proposed, seconded by Councillor S Hamilton, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Alderman Gibson left the meeting at this stage – 8.50 p.m.)

The proposer welcomed the opportunity to provide community facilities at both the East End and the Scrabo Estate.

The seconder stated that, on visiting both areas, he had been amazed at the level of work that went on by community representatives. He added that the provision of community facilities would greatly assist them. He stated that he had been delighted that the Needs Analysis undertaken by Strategic Leisure had identified need in the area.

One member queried the difference in the cost of each facility, with that proposed for the East End being £1.2 million and that for the Scrabo Estate £200,000. He also enquired about the proposed usage of each facility, suggesting that many community centres within the Borough were under utilised.

The Director of Leisure Service explained that both Community Associations had made presentations to the Council on their need for community facilities. He stressed that the East End group had requested a traditional community centre, while the Scrabo residents had requested a small facility which they would manage themselves.

Continuing, he stated that the Council's community centres were well used, however they operated at an agreed deficit.

The member expressed concern at the difference in costs and asked that the recommendation in respect of the East End facility be further considered.

The proposer reminded members that both groups had made presentations to the Council and brought forward business plans. He then referred to the Area Plan, recently adopted, which had shown much new development in the East of the town, adding that the proposed community centre would meet the additional need and be well utilised.

It was **AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Alderman Shannon, seconded by Councillor S Hamilton, **THAT** the recommendation be adopted.

CONSTRUCTION OF LEISURE CENTRE AT DAIRY HALL, NEWTOWNARDS - ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS (Deferred from Council Services Committee on 18 March 2009)

Report dated 26 March 2009 (copy previously circulated) was tabled from the Director of Leisure Services. A summary of the study recently undertaken by traffic consultants, Faber Maunsell, into access arrangements for the Dairy Hall site was also circulated to members.

Whilst all of the options considered presented difficulties to a greater or lesser degree, the following had been highlighted as the most feasible taking both technical and land issues into consideration

Option 4 Closure of Donard Avenue

Technically feasible, relatively minor land issues, but possible community objection.

Option 7a and 7b Direct Access onto John Street

Technical difficulties with junction spacing but could be discussed with Roads Service. Minimal land take issues.

Option 8 Realignment of Donard Avenue and direct access onto John Street

No technical difficulties but would require purchase of Ambulance Station.

Based on the above, it was **recommended** that officers commence discussions with Roads Service and, if necessary, be authorised to commence negotiations with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service for the purchase of its land at John Street.

Members would be kept updated as to progress on a monthly basis.

The Director of Leisure Services drew members' attention to maps placed before them which illustrated each option. He explained that the roundabout option was the most expensive.

It was **AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Councillor Bell, seconded by Alderman Shannon, **THAT** the recommendation be adopted.

FINANCIAL REPORT ON NEW LEISURE CENTRE AT DAIRY HALL, NEWTOWNARDS

Report (copy previously circulated) was tabled.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the figure of £23 million included the purchase of the Ambulance Station site.

It was **AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Councillor Bell, seconded by Alderman Shannon, **THAT** the report be noted.

ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

Information Day – Future of Royal Mail – Belfast – 3 April 2009

It was **AGREED**, on the proposal of Alderman Shannon, seconded by Alderman Craig, **THAT** Councillor Drysdale be appointed to attend.

(Councillor Bell left the meeting at this stage – 9.09 p.m.)

Conference - From Neighbourhood Renewal to Community Planning - Belfast - 15 April 2009

It was **AGREED**, on the proposal of Councillor T Hamilton, seconded by Alderman Shannon, **THAT** one Officer be appointed to attend.

THAT CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS
(The meeting terminated at 9.10 p.m.)