

NEWRY MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on Monday 28 March 2022 at 1.00pm, remotely via Microsoft Teams, regarding Down GAA Centre of Excellence at Ballykinlar

Chairperson: Councillor C Mason

In attendance: (Committee Members)

Councillor T Andrews

Councillor R Burgess

Councillor D Curran

Councillor O Hanlon

Councillor R Howell

Councillor D McAteer

Councillor G O Hare

Councillor D Murphy

Councillor M Rice

Councillor G Sharvin

Councillor J Tinnelly

Officials in

Ms D Carville, Deputy Chief Executive

Mr M Lipsett, Director Active & Healthy Communities

Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager

Ms L Dillon, Democratic Services Officer

Also in attendance:

Mr F McCormick, Down GAA Advisory Board

Mr J McGrillen, Down GAA Advisory Board

Mr S O McAteer, Secretary, Down GAA County Board

Mr A McNeill, Faithful & Gould Consultants

SP/013/2022: APOLOGIES / CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

Apologies were recorded for:

Councillor H Gallagher

SP/014/2022: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

**SP/015/2022: PRESENTATION BY DOWN GAA
BALLYKINLAR ADVISORY BOARD**

The Chairperson welcomed the representatives from Down GAA Ballykinlar Advisory Board to the meeting.

On behalf of the Down GAA Advisory Board, Mr McCormick expressed sincere appreciation to the Chairperson, Council and senior Council Officials for meeting today and referred to core documents in relation to the project which had now been circulated to Members.

Read: Background briefing paper re: Down GAA Ballykinlar Centre of Participation Project and Project Advisory Board. (Copy circulated)

Read: Biographies re: Down GAA Ballykinlar Advisory Board Members.
(Copy circulated)

Read: Presentation to Project Board re: Down GAA Centre of Participation.
(Copy circulated)

Mr McCormick explained the key objective of the Advisory Board was to provide Members with background detail relating to the project and to secure Council support for the project with particular reference to the Levelling Up Fund the perspective for which has now been launched with a closing date for submissions of 12noon on 06 July 2022.

In providing background on the project, he explained Down GAA have not had their own training facility but in 2018 when the Ministry of Defence and the GAA commenced discussions on the potential use of the Ballykinlar site the concept of a new training facility evolved into a reconciliation project providing an opportunity for both the GAA and the Ministry of Defence to reach out to the community in terms of reconciliation.

Mr McAteer said the concept of Down GAA developing facilities at Ballykinlar was initially discussed in 1994 however whilst it had not been pursued any further at that time, negotiations did start again in 2017-2018 to establish if the necessary land could be acquired, whilst acknowledging the historical significance of any arrangement between the Ministry of Defence and the GAA which has now been fully endorsed by GAA at both national and provincial level and develop a project which reflects the shared history of the area.

Mr McCormick pointed out the importance of noting this was not only a Down GAA project but was significant in terms of reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Mr McNeill gave a detailed presentation by Faithful & Gould, on the project plan:

- In December 2018 Faithful & Gould were appointed as project managers to oversee planning application – planning approval granted August 2021.
- Site size approximately 32 acres.
- Project proposal is to refurbish existing pitch
- Move entrance to a more central position
- Development of 4 pitches
- Refurbish existing changing rooms
- Refurbish existing club rooms, with inclusion of second storey for community gym facility
- Provision of fully enclosed community use MUGA
- Stadium pitch with spectator stand for 850 people, including 4 changing rooms and associated parking for cars and buses plus supporting accommodation: museum/educational facility/administration space/kitchen/physio rehabilitation room/referees room/multi purpose hall/equipment stores/walking trail.
- Note: most of the built accommodation will be positioned centrally within the site.

Mr McCormick gave further detail as follows:

- Cost of project estimated at approximately £10m plus vat – the Levelling Up Fund has been identified as a key funding source.
- A Project Advisory Board has been established with cross community representation.
- Use of the facility to be maximised during the day time for schools, educational partnerships, learning programmes, etc.
- Discussions are ongoing with regard to road infrastructure

Councillors raised the following issues:

- Further information regarding road infrastructure.
- Communication to update local community regarding project.
- Funding sources.
- Timeline for commencement and completion of project
- Investigate provision of a Service Level Agreement with Council in terms of community usage of the floodlit pitches at night.
- Provision of handball facility within the project.
- Rise in material costs.

The representatives from the Advisory Board gave the following responses on the issues raised by Councillors:

- A sub group of the Advisory Board has been formed which will conduct outreach to the local community regarding the project and will engage on an ongoing basis with

the wider community within the Ballykinlar area.

- Meetings have been held with Department for Infrastructure; Department for Communities; Department for Rural Development regarding the road Infrastructure – issues have been resolved to address footpath provision from town; traffic calming measures at Commons Rd, upgrade works to improve safety at Commons Road/Tyrella road junction.
- The Levelling Up Fund (round two) will be central to the project going ahead in one phase and the Advisory Board are confident the project will meet the required criteria for this funding avenue and thus allow for other funding sources to come on board.
- Subject to funding availability, the project could progress to procurement and appointment of contractor within a 6-7 month timeline, with construction timeline of approximately 14-16 months. It is reasonable to say the project could be operational within 3 years.
- Indoor and outdoor handball will be accommodated within the project.
- It is accepted costings will have to be revised given the current climate.

The Chairperson thanked the Advisory Board for the presentation and extended congratulations to the Board for and pledged the Council's support for the project.

Mr McCormick thanked the Council for it's ongoing support. He said they were now entering a very important phase of the project in terms of the Levelling Up Fund and it was hoped the Council could set up a working group that would consider a joint bid with the Down GAA Advisory Board for round two Levelling Up Funding.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2.00pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 03 May 2022.

Signed: Councillor C Mason
Chairperson of Council

Signed: Mr M Lipsett
Director Active & Healthy Communities
