

Extract of the Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24th September, 2021

Consultation on Signage - Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres – Options Paper

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration a report presenting options for the language or languages to be used in naming and signage in those leisure facilities designated with a City-wide catchment.

He reminded the Committee that, in accordance with the decision taken at the special meeting of the Council on 11th October, 2019 around dual-language signage, a City-wide consultation had been undertaken, to inform the approach to be adopted in respect of Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres, which were deemed to have a City-wide catchment. The Committee had subsequently, at its meeting on 24th January, 2020, granted approval to erect bilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

He reported that Mr. J. Kremer, an equality consultant, who had been commissioned by the Council, was in attendance to outline the findings of the consultation exercise.

Mr. Kremer reviewed the consultation methodology and provided details on the number of responses which had been received. In terms of the results, he confirmed that there had been overall support for bilingual naming, using English and Irish. However, where more local consultation had been undertaken, strong opposition and views had been expressed in relation to Lisnasharragh and Templemore Leisure Centres. In terms of Olympia Leisure Centre, the consultation had not provoked the same reaction at that time. However, he and Council officers had met subsequently with local community representatives who had expressed strong views against bilingual signage in English and Irish.

The City Solicitor pointed out that Mr. Kremer had met with officers from the Legal and Civic Services and the Physical Programmes sections to review the results of the consultation and the views which had been expressed by local communities and Party Group Leaders. In light of those, the following options had been drafted for the Committee's consideration:

1. to retain the current use of English only at the centres;
2. to use bilingual or some element of bilingual signage at the centres (English and Irish);
3. to use tri-lingual or some element of tri-lingual signage at the centres (English, Irish and Ulster-Scots);
4. to use multi-lingual or some element of multi-lingual signage at the Centres (English, Irish, Ulster-Scots and the language of the predominant new community in the City Council district, as informed by information on languages in new migrant communities in Belfast);
5. the use of pictorial signage is recommended;
6. to have a single sign at the point of entry (the main directional sign) in the formats suggested at options 2, 3 or 4, with the remaining signs in English and pictorial format, as a way of delivering balance;

7. it is recommended that the signage under consideration is wayfinding only.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy,

That the Committee agrees:

- i. to erect bilingual external naming and internal directional signage at Olympia Leisure Centre, with a report on the detail and appearance of that signage to be submitted to a future meeting;
- ii. that a report on linguistic accessibility at Lisnasharragh and Templemore Leisure Centres be submitted to a future meeting; and
- iii. that a multi-lingual welcome sign be erected in the entrance/reception area of all leisure centres.

Amendment

Moved by Alderman Kingston,
Seconded by Councillor Bunting,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the linguistic signage to be erected at Olympia Leisure Centre to allow for further engagement to take place with the local community.

On a vote, six Members voted for the amendment and twelve against, with one "no vote" and it was declared lost.

The original proposal, which had been proposed by Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor Murphy, was then put to the meeting, when twelve Members voted for and six against, with one 'no vote', and it was declared carried.

The Committee agreed also to adopt the recommendation to proceed with pictorial signage.