

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of Meeting No 857 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney, on 14th February 2007 at 7.00 pm.

**IN THE CHAIR** Councillor J Finlay, Mayor

**PRESENT****Aldermen**

C Cousley, Deputy Mayor  
F Campbell  
J Simpson

**Councillors**

A Cavlan	B Kennedy
P McGuigan, MLA	D McKay
A Patterson	E Robinson
I Stevenson	M Storey, MLA

**APOLOGIES****Alderman**

H Connolly

**Councillors**

T McKeown  
M McCamphill  
R Wilson

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Chief Executive  
Director of Borough Services  
Director of Central & Leisure Services  
Head of Corporate & Development Services

**Press****857.1 RATE ESTIMATE 2007/08**

The Chief Executive advised that the Management Team had considered all the changes suggested at the last meeting and had also developed some further charges. The target set by Council was an increase of under 6.5% - the team believed it could be brought to under 6%. The Regional Rate increase will be 6%.

He referred to the papers circulated, firstly the DUP proposals. Only one of these has not been included – the removal of overtime working for smoking ban enforcement. He explained later in the meeting why and what the alternative was to reduce the rate by at least the same amount. The paper of Sinn Féin proposals was also circulated.

Council could decide whether to consider each of these and vote on them one by one, or whether to have a composite proposal to debate and vote on. It was suggested that members might want to adjourn to consider that, and Officers may need an adjournment to arrive at the final resolution, which could be put to Council.

The Chief Executive returned to the matter of removal of overtime working for smoking ban enforcement and outlined why management was suggesting that overtime would be needed to deal with this matter.

He explained that it is a new piece of legislation, which would require training, advice and finally enforcement to be effective. Council had agreed with the reason for the ban and indeed had introduced it earlier in its own premises as a symbol of that support.

While some Councils (e.g. Belfast) had taken on additional staff for this work, this Council had not. Training of premises owners and advice to them will be fitted in with other duties in the normal working day. Management feel, however, that if other important enforcement work is not to suffer, the extra work on this enforcement will need additional staff input. Time off in-lieu clearly will not provide that, as it merely shifts the time staff are working, without increasing the number of people available. Effective enforcement will be needed in the evenings and at weekends when premises are crowded and that will have to be paid for. However, management's other suggestions for cuts in the budget will more than compensate for that. He then presented details of the additional savings identified by management, as follows:-

[10]	Withdraw from Lower Bann Partnership – no match funding and no projects	£12,600 savings Rate Increase is 5.86%
[11]	Withdraw from Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust – no evident benefits – no projects – no match funding	£6,000 savings Rate Increase is 5.72%
[28]	Reduce Members conference /courses budget which is underspent – but review criteria, maintain £1,000/member but withdraw ability to transfer.	Saving £5,400 Rate Increase is 5.59%

**The Chief Executive stated that the Director of Central and Leisure Services would now take members through the amendments.**

The Director then took members through the adjustments to draft 4 of the budget, per DUP suggestions, as follows:

Page	Service	Budget Detail	£	£
1	Loan Charges	Capital projects	9,323	9,323
7	JD Leisure Centre	Income	<u>5,000</u>	5,000
9	Sports Gds P&OS	Plants and materials	3,000	3,000
10	Tourist facilities	Income	<u>2,000</u>	2,000
15	Environmental Health	Partnership working – IT mobile working	<u>500</u>	500
20	Street cleaning	Street cleaning review (see note 1) Income	5,000 <u>4,000</u>	9,000

21	Waste collection	Plant/vehicles – waste collection	3,000	
		Refuse containers income	<u>5,000</u>	8,000
22	Waste disposal	Publicity	<u>- 4,500</u>	4,500
24	Building control	Income	<u>20,000</u>	20,000
		<b>Total</b>		<b>52,323</b>

Rate Increase is 6.15%

(Note 1 – to be financed from Reserves)

The Director then presented the adjustments to draft 4 of the budget, per Sinn Féin suggestions.

Page	Service	Budget Detail	£
1	Bank Interest		10,300
1	Loan charges	Capital projects	25,320
4	Cultural Services	Borough Arts Committee	- 2,000
6	Sports Development	Sports Advisory Committee	- 1,000
9	Sports Gds P&OS	Sports posts	- 2,000
12	Community Services	Support grants	- 2,000
20	Street Cleaning	Wages – 2 Operatives	- 36,000 - 5,000
28	Members Allowances	Conferences/Courses	4,000
28	Mayors Allowance		1,000
29	Official Visits		6,000
		Twinning Association	2,000
36	Contributions	Hospice	- 1,000
		NA Community Network	- 3,000
		Rural Community Network	- 300
	<b>Total Saving</b>		<b>320</b>

Rate increase is 7.49%

Alderman Simpson sought confirmation that the proposed additional building control post was temporary. The Director of Borough Services stated that the proposed post was for a 12-month period, following which it would be reviewed. The member also expressed the opinion that as the number of shops and

premises in the Borough was decreasing, there should be sufficient capacity to deal with the smoking ban within existing resources on the basis of time off in lieu. Referring to dog control costs, he suggested that the call-out arrangements be revisited on the basis of the number of call-outs to date. The Chief Executive advised that this arrangement was to be subject to review in any case as, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, Council has to have, by law, an emergency plan in place, which required cover 24/7 x 365 days per year.

Another issue raised by Alderman Simpson was collection of cardboard from business premises. The Director of Borough Services explained that Council had entered into contractual arrangements to cover collections at CA sites. If Council collect cardboard, it would be liable to a charge per tonne. There is a service available to the business community and this is considered as a reasonable approach with regard to cardboard.

Councillor McGuigan expressed concern about some of the service delivery and contributions Council will be able to make, as a result of the reductions proposed, which could leave council open to a charge of being anti-rural. He considered some of the savings should be revised, with reductions elsewhere and ensuring contributions to rural groups are retained, while Councillor Cavlan urged Council to retain contribution to the Hospice.

#### **Councillor Kennedy arrived at 7.30 pm.**

Councillor Robinson said the DUP group was of the view that the overtime working for smoking ban enforcement should be removed and the cost funded from existing salary budgets in Environmental Health.

#### **The meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to allow party groups to consider the various issues raised.**

#### **The meeting reconvened at 7.45 pm.**

The parties then presented their final proposals:

##### **DUP**

- Retain contribution to Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust in view of the current, topical issue of the Dark Hedges at Bregagh.
- Members' allowances to be retained at the level in draft 4 with any surplus going into reserves.
- Cost of overtime working for smoking ban to be met from existing salary budgets
- Withdraw from Lower Bann Partnership
- Retain contribution to North Antrim Community Network in current year and undertake a detailed analysis of this and all contributions to other bodies to determine the benefit to the Borough.
- Remove contribution to the Hospice in the current year, while accepting it and contributions to other charities as worthy causes and develop a protocol by which charities are supported.

##### **Sinn Féin**

- Withdraw from Lower Bann Partnership
- Retain contribution to Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
- Support Management Proposal to reduce Member Allowances

- Retain contribution to Hospice but review criteria for contributions to charities

It was proposed by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Alderman Campbell that:

- a) **£3,600 for enforcing smoking ban be met from within existing budgets**
- b) **Contribution to Lower Bann Partnership be removed.**
- c) **Contribution of £3,000 to North Antrim Community Network be retained and an analysis of contributions to bodies within the Borough from the association be provided.**
- d) **A detailed analysis of benefits of contributions to other bodies be carried out.**
- e) **Remove contribution to Hospice and that officers develop a protocol for dealing with requests from charities as soon as possible.**

On being put to the meeting, 7 members voted for the motion and 3 members voted against.

**The Mayor declared the motion carried**

\* **Councillor Stevenson arrived at 8.00 pm.**

**The meeting then adjourned for 15 minutes to allow the Director of Central and Leisure Services to recalculate the estimate figures.**

**The meeting reconvened at 8.15 pm.**

The Director of Central and Leisure Services advised that, based on the revisions to draft 4 agreed by Council, the rate increase was 5.85%, with a non-domestic property rate of 21.5659p and a domestic property rate of 0.2708p.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Robinson:

**that Council approve the total net expenditure for 2007/08 of £6,320,134, the net amount to be raised at £4,563,340 and that the District Rate be fixed at:**

<b>Non-Domestic Property</b>	<b>21.5659p</b>
<b>Domestic property</b>	<b>0.2768p</b>

On being put to the meeting, nine members voted for the proposal, no member voted against and three abstained, voting being recorded as follows at the request of Councillor Storey.

<b>For the motion (9)</b>	<b>Against (0)</b>	<b>Abstentions</b>
Councillor Finlay		Councillor McGuigan
Alderman Cousley		Councillor McKay
Councillor Robinson		Councillor Cavlan
Councillor Patterson		
Councillor Stevenson		

Councillor Storey  
Alderman Campbell  
Councillor Kennedy  
Alderman Simpson

**The Mayor declared the motion carried.**

#### **857.2 TENDERS FOR GOODS AND SERVICES 2007/08**

The Director of Central and Leisure Services had been invited by public advertisement and the time for receipt of tenders had now closed.

It was proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Robinson and  
**AGREED:**

***that the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and the Director of Central and Leisure Services open tenders received for goods and services for 2007/08 and that these be evaluated and a report presented to Council at its March meeting.***

**This being all the business, the meeting closed at 8.20 pm**