

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of Council Meeting No 897 held 'in committee' in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney, on Tuesday 3rd February 2009 at 4.00 pm and 5th February 2009 at 3.00 p.m.

IN THE CHAIR Councillor J Finlay, Mayor

PRESENT

Aldermen
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
F Campbell
H Connolly
J Simpson

Councillors
A Cavlan
M McCamphill
P McGuigan
A Patterson
E Robinson
I Stevenson

APOLOGIES

Councillors
B Kennedy
M Storey, MLA

IN ATTENDANCE

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

897.1 RATES ESTIMATE

The Chief Executive stated that at the last meeting members resolved that officers should review the rates estimate and produce a revised estimate keeping the increase to 10% on the current year's estimate. At that meeting the increase proposed was almost 31%.

He stated "The rates book shows an increase of 10%. To achieve that level of reduction, some difficult choices have been made and members need to be aware of these. The main changes are detailed in the 2009/10 Budget Book. They show increases and decreases from the current year's budget.

In order to fully explain the changes two further reports have been produced and circulated.

- The first one relates to contributions to outside bodies and details those which have been removed from this budget, those which have been retained and two which could be removed for next year's budget, if notice is given in 2008/09. The paper also sets out the likely consequences. Appendix 1.
- The second paper relates to events and projects which were included in earlier versions of the rate estimate, but are not in the current book. Some are annual events, some were one off items to allow known risks to be dealt with. These are highlighted so that members are aware of the impact and the risks that council will therefore carry. Appendix 2.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services will take us through the changes in more detail, but I want to mention some general points: -

Due to a reduction in penny product & general grant, projected rises in pay and pension costs and a reduction in bank interest & balance applied, we face an increase of almost 10% before any other factors are considered.

- We must also budget for higher gas & electricity prices and an increase in landfill tax. Inflation is still a factor to be considered and the government's favourite measure, CPI, stood at 3.1% in December. In the last two years we have not had any general inflationary increase in budgets and that has been repeated this year.
- Looking at the expenditure figures for 9 months of this year, 22 services are over budget, four are exactly at 75% and 18 are underspent.
- Looking at the larger services, those with expenditure budgets over £250k, 16 are at or ahead of projected expenditure for 9 months and only 6 are behind. So we face a challenge to live within this year's provision for many services.
- There was a large increase in net expenditure in the budget for this year compared with last, but that was more than swallowed up in payroll costs. There was actually a cut in the money allocated to services after payroll costs are excluded. To find a further reduction this year without significantly affecting services has been very difficult.
- Many of the savings have come from cutting payments to other organisations and those were chosen precisely because they do not impact on direct services. We realise that these are not easy choices for members.
- What is before members meets the target without any job losses and without significantly cutting direct services. Further cuts to service budgets can be made, but only in our view at the expense of reducing services.
- If that is the view, then Council needs to give officers direction as to what services should be reduced or discontinued".

The Director of Central & Leisure Services circulated a paper, Appendix 3, detailing budget increases, rates book V4. She highlighted reduction in general grant and penny product, resulting from vacancies, losses and write offs and advised on package of assistance from the Finance Minister towards the general grant calculated at .8% for Ballymoney. She also referred to reduction in the penny product 2008-09 which would mean there would be clawback from Council and this could only be met from reserve account.

The Director of Leisure & Central Services confirmed the level of reserve as £800,000; £200,000 from the account was applied to last years rate and the Council allocated in March 2008, £66,000 for capital projects, together with additional projects funded during the year for which there was no budget, leaving approximately £500,000 in reserves. This figure does not include any claw back from the 2008-09 penny product.

She then went through the various reductions and increases in service budgets, as set out in the schedule circulated, appendix 3. Items not included, which Council had committed to consider at rates time were:

- Sponsorship of a race at Armoy
- Financial assistance to VJMCC for 'Roon the Toon'
- Budget for additional events to be held in Ballymoney

No capital projects have been budgeted. However she requested Council to consider the essential upgrade of the fire alarm system (total cost £60,000) and tiling work at the Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre (est £215,000)

Other potential savings discussed by members included:

- Reduction in contributions to outside bodies and events, noting consequences.
- Ban on overtime, reduced opening hours of facilities, reduced working hours, short time working, redundancies.
- Provision of own services vis-à-vis outside contractors.

Responding to questions from members on expenditure for utility charges to date, the Director of Borough Services urged caution in extrapolating figures after the first nine months of the current period, as some services were seasonal.

The Chief Executive referred to increases listed totalling £475,000 in the 2009/10 budget and advised of the make up, as set out below, illustrating that of the total increase only some £8,900 was attributed to service costs.

Item	£.
Loss of Penny Product	93,575
Loss of Grant	27,550
Not taking money out of Reserves	139,175
Bank Interest	50,000
Salaries & Wages	155,800
Increase in Service	8,900
Total	475,000

In the previous year 08/09 of the increase of £665,000 a similar analysis revealed a cut in service budgets of £113,000.

- * **Councillor McGuigan, Alderman Campbell and Councillor Stevenson left the meeting at 5.00 pm and returned at 5.05 pm. Councillor Patterson left the meeting at this time.**

Include in other issues raised by members were:

- Cost of single status and associated back pay, increased staff costs
- Mandatory and optional service provision.
- Overtime costs, general and contractual, and holiday cover costs and cost of staff overtime v. agency and/or contract labour.
- Need for development of redundancy policy
- Potential to increase charges/service income
- Reduction of travel allowance to below tax threshold in line with civil service arrangements.
- Reduction in members' conference budgets
- Substantial reduction in building control income due to economic downturn

Members agreed that the meeting be adjourned, to be reconvened on Thursday 5th February at 3.00 pm to provide an opportunity for party groups to further consider the way forward.

The meeting adjourned at 5.45 pm.

Appendix 1 – Events/Projects removed from budgets consequences paper CMT30.1.09

Appendix 2 – contributions reductions consequences paper CMT30.1.09

Appendix 3 – Schedule of 2009/10 budget increases – rates book v.4

THE MEETING RECONVENED ON THURSDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2009
AT 3.00 P.M.

IN THE CHAIR Councillor J Finlay, Mayor

PRESENT

Aldermen
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
F Campbell
H Connolly
J Simpson

Councillors
A Cavlan
M McCamphill
P McGuigan
B Kennedy
A Patterson
E Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE

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

897.1 RATES ESTIMATE

The Director of Central & Leisure Services referred members to Council's agreement to undertake an inspection of vacant properties throughout the Borough on behalf of Land & Property Services. The inspection had taken place in the last calendar year and in the light of properties that are now occupied, a re-calculation has been made for 08/09 and 09/10 that indicates additional income of £76,000. This equates to 1.6%, bringing the current rates estimate down from 10% to 8.4%. The Director advised that this remains the only change to Version 4 of the rates book. She further advised that only 1/3rd of the properties to be inspected have been completed and the plan is to continue with the exercise. A table showing the progress of the exercise will be provided for the next meeting. The figure of £76,000 is an estimate of the percentage of occupied properties based on the total number of vacancies. The figure could increase but this percentage will be reflected in the penny product for 09/10 and future years.

Responding to members' questions on salaries and wages costs the Director advised that the pay increase had been reduced to 2% and since Council was bound by nationally agreed rates, no further reduction could be made.

* **Councillor Kennedy arrived at 3.22 pm.**

Parties were asked to comment on the book and put forward suggestions as to what elements need to be reconsidered. A schedule of suggested revisions to estimates, savings/additions, put forward by parties, is set out in appendix 4. Any further suggestions by parties are to be provided to the Chief Executive by early following morning.

- * **Alderman Campbell and Alderman Connolly left the meeting at 3.45 pm and returned at 3.55 pm.**
- **The Chair left the meeting at 3.55 pm to attend to Mayoral duties. Alderman Cousley assumed position of Chair until the return of the Mayor at 4.05 pm.**

In response to members' questions the Chief Executive advised that the development of a redundancy policy would require a lead in period, estimated about six months, as following development of document and adoption by Council consultation with the trade unions would be required. He also advised on recently issued draft vacancy control policy circulated by the Local Government Staff Commission, in preparation for RPA. With regard to Council's current arrangements for consideration of vacant posts and monitoring of agency costs the Chief Executive reminded members that the Resources Task Group had a policy in place where all vacancies were considered and it also had reviewed agency costs and made no recommendations for changing the current arrangements. This matter could be listed for review again should Group wish.

Other items which engaged members' attention included:

- Remit of the Resources Task Group to consider service/staffing levels, agency costs and identification of posts which it would be essential to cover during holidays and other absence;
- Reduction in member's allowances below maximum payable and linking of allowance payable to level of attendance
- Reduction in Members' Conference budget
- Reduction in overtime and agency costs
- Protection of services/support which affect the community
- Current vacant posts and forthcoming retirements
- Reducing travelling allowance rate

- * **Councillor Kennedy left the meeting at 4.20 pm.**

897.2 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on 9th February at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber. It was agreed that a further meeting be held on 11th February at 7.00 p.m.

The meeting closed at 5.35 pm.

Appendix 4 – Schedule of suggested reductions/additions put forward by parties.

EVENTS / PROJECTS REMOVED FROM BUDGETS – CONSEQUENCES PAPER – CMT 30.1.09

Page No.	Service	Budget Detail	Amount	Consequence	Decision
4	Cultural	Mayors Show	8,500	Loss of major Council event and community involvement	
		Events/Exhibitions	10,000	No new exhibitions for newly fitted out temp museum gallery	
6	Sports Devel	Programme costs	2,000.00	Additional sports programmes not provided	
7	JDLC				
8	Summer Scheme	Summer scheme	13,500	Loss of summer programme for in excess of 200 children	
9	Sports Gnds POS	Tree surgery Rockend	3,250	Damage to road traffic and pedestrians possible	
		Christmas lights	20,000	Non erection of strings and features – high visible impact	
		Riverside Park – Essential path repairs	Costing awaited	Possible claims against Council because of uneven existing surfaces	
10	Tourism Facil	Tree clearance	4,250.00	Overshadowing of sites – risk of tree fall due to storm and possible damage when sites in use	
		De-silting Marina	8,000	Unable to let berths due to reduced draught	
		Canoe Access Signage	1,026	Scheme may not progress without all partners contributing apportioned funding	
11	Tourism	Events	22,000	No events organised	
15	Cemeteries	Grave Shoring	5,250	Health and safety compromised	
16	Environmental Health	LA21-Biodiversity Project	8,000	Council has sought grant-aid in conjunction with Coleraine and Limavady Councils. Project dependent on each participant contributing	
21	Street Cleansing	Village Litter Bins	4,000	Continue with extant aged receptacles	
22	Waste Collection				
23	Waste Disposal	Landfill Site closure provision	150,000	Local Government Audit0r requires Council to make provision	
28	Economic Development	Programmes & Projects	20,000	Reduced programme/project activity	
		Community funding bids support	4,000	Reduced community support / loss of funding	
32	Corporate Management	Corporate Planning	4,300	Reduced ability to lobby	
		Citizens Survey	6,000	Non-compliance with governance statement	
		Marketing & Communications	8,000	No bulletins published and distribution to all borough households	
		Printing & Stationery	4,000	Reduced branded paper printing	
		Corporate training	8,000	Reduced staff preparation for RPA	
37	Contribution other bodies	> >	> >	See paper 2 –	
		Total	£314,076		

CONTRIBUTIONS REDUCTIONS - CONSEQUENCES PAPER CMT 30.1.09

needs notice

page	Budget	Contribution	option to remove	consider nxt yr	budget retained	consequence	Decision
4	Cultural Fac	NW200	£ 10,000.00			Disastrous - agreed a 3 year sponsorship. 2009 is 80th anniversary of NW and council plans to open new museum at NW200 week with 1st major temporary exhibition being Motorcycle Road Racing and hoping to attract a lot of NW visitors.	
4		Borough Arts Committee	£ 15,000.00			Disastrous - Council has provided this service since 1972. To remove funding would result in no Arts programme. Currently already contracted for a number of Arts events in 09/10 eg Pantomime	
4		community festivals	£ 5,000.00			08/09 1st year of funding. Groups not able to claim all grant offered	
4		Causeway Museum Serv		£ 16,000.00			
6	Sports Dev	Sports Advisory Committee	£ 10,000.00			No grants for sporting athletes and no Sports Awards and other committee activities	
9	SGPOS	NI Milk Cup	£ 16,000.00			risk to event	
9		Other Sports Contribs	£ 2,000.00			reduced support for events	
10	Tourism Fac	Lower Bann Adv Cttee	£ 5,000.00			withdrawal of membership and loss of voice	
10		Lower Bann P/Ship	£ 5,000.00			withdrawal of membership and loss of voice	
10		CC& Glens RTP	£ 17,500.00			Currently in a 3 year agreement. Detrimental effect on promotion and publicity of Ballymoney and its facilities and events	
11	Tourism	CC Glens Heritage Trust	£ 6,000.00			Detrimental effect on sustainable tourism, promotion of 'green' B&B's and management of AONB's	
13		CR Comm Support Grant	£ 5,000.00			Detrimental effect on community and other groups in the borough - loss of activities for senior citizens, children, etc	
13		CAB		£ 18,500.00			
29	Off Visits	Twinning Association	£ 4,000.00			possible collapse of TA / reduced support for twinning	
23	Waste	Waste Mgt P/Ship		£ 15,000.00			
16	E Health	Group Demand EH		£ 29,455.00			

25 Bld Control	Group Demand BC		£ 16,900.00	
37 COB	Specified bodies*		£ 11,000.00	statutory requirement
	NILGA		£ 6,000.00	
	North Antrim Agr Assoc	£ 1,200.00		loss of key sponsor, risk to event
	Road Safety Cttee	£ 1,000.00		reduced road safety activity & input
	NI Ploughing Assoc	£ 300.00		minor or no impact
	Somme Assoc	£ 250.00		withdrawal of membership and loss of voice
	Wm Keown Trust	£ 100.00		withdrawal of membership and loss of voice
	N A Community Network	£ 3,000.00		loss of key local community support and council voice
	Rural Community Network	£ 200.00		withdrawal of membership, loss of community support and council voice
38 SI15 Exp.	Fuel Poverty	£ 7,000.00		withdrawal from scheme/options to source other funding to be explored
	TOTAL	£ 113,550.00		

* Specified Bodies
 NI Joint Council, Joint Negotiating Cttee for Ces, Employers Org for Local Govt, Local Authorities
 Co-Ordinators of Regulatory Services, Local Government International Bureau, Local Government
 Training Group and Local Government Staff Commission

2009/2010 Budget Increases - Rates Book v 4

Only material amounts are detailed - other small budget increases and decreases cancel each other out.

<u>Page</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Budget Detail</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>% on Rates</u>
1		Reduction in Estimated Penny Product			1.97
1		Reduction in General Grant			0.58
1		No Reserve Balance Applied			2.93
1		Bank Interest	50,000	50,000	1.05
4	Cultural Services	North West 200	- 10,000		
		Arts Committee	- 15,000		
		Community Festival Fund	- 5,000		
		Mayors Show	- 8,500		
			-	38,500 -	0.81
4	Museum Service	Events/Exhibitions	2,000		
		CMS Contribution	2,000		
				4,000	0.08
5	Town Hall	Building Maintenance	2,100		
		Building Maintenance contracts	8,318		
		Electricity	7,000		
		Water Rates	400		
				17,818	0.38
6	Sports Development	Sports Advisory Committee	- 10,000		
			-	10,000 -	0.21
7	JD Leisure Centre	Electricity	60,000		
		Oil/Gas	5,000		
		Protective clothing	- 1,000		
		Maintenance - buildings	- 2,510		
		Maintenance - fixed plant	- 6,500		
		Bank Charges	2,000		
		Income increase	- 35,000		
				21,990	0.46
8	Summer Scheme		- 13,500		
			-	13,500 -	0.28
9	Sports Gds, P&OS	Maintenace contracts	5,350		
		Electricity	2,286		
		Machinery/Vehicles	10,000		

		Contributions - Milk Cup 16000, other 2000-	18,000		
		Christmas Lights	- 22,866		
			<u> </u>	- 23,230 -	0.49
10	Tourist Facilities	Building Maintenance contracts	5,417		
		Electricity	8,000		
		Maintenance/Repairs to Equipment	2,950		
		Computer Software	1,300		
		Increased Income	- 5,000		
		Lower Bann Contributions	- 10,000		
		Town Centre Cycle Loop	- 5,000		
			<u> </u>	- 2,333 -	0.05
11	Tourism	CC&G Tourism Partnership	- 17,500		
		CC&G Heritage Trust	- 6,000		
			<u> </u>	- 23,500 -	0.49
12	Community Services	Electricity	1,283		
		Building Maintenance contracts	3,680		
			<u> </u>	4,963	0.10
13	Community Relations	Community Support Grants	- 5,000		
			<u> </u>	- 5,000 -	0.11
16	Environmental Health	Group demand	- 2,456		
		Income reduction	15,160		
			<u> </u>	12,704	0.27
22	Waste Collection	Plant/Vehicles	20,000		
		Refuse containers	3,960		
		Increased income - trade waste	- 11,500		
		Income reduction - skip service	1,755		
			<u> </u>	14,215	0.30
23	Waste Disposal	Water rates	- 3,000		
		Rates	1,400		
		Disposal Charges	- 61,803		
		Haulage Costs	- 21,590		
		Landfill Tax	86,400		
		WHT Facility Operating Costs	3,000		
23	Recycling	CA Sites	2,440		
		Green Waste	18,000		
		Brown Bins	- 21,900		
		Hardcore	5,000		
			<u> </u>	7,947	0.17

25	Building Control	Computer Software maintenance	4,282		
		Income reduction	60,000		
			<u> </u>	64,282	1.35
26	Other Comm. Assets	Maintenance contracts	- 7,819		
		War Memorials	650		
			<u> </u>	- 7,169 -	0.15
28	Economic Development	Projects	- 75,949		
		Income reduction	68,896		
			<u> </u>	- 7,053 -	0.15
29	Members Allowances	Travel/Subsistence	- 1,335		
		Conferences/courses	- 4,000		
			<u> </u>	- 5,335 -	0.11
30	Official Visits/ Civic	Twinning Assoc contribution	- 4,000		
			<u> </u>	- 4,000 -	0.08
32	Corporate Management	Printing/stationery	- 4,000		
		Marketing/communication	- 8,000		
		Planning consultancy	- 2,000		
		Corporate planning	- 700		
		Audit fees	2,000		
		Internal audit	- 1,450		
		Corporate well being	- 1,000		
		Corporate training	- 8,000		
			<u> </u>	- 23,150 -	0.49
37	Contributions to other bodies		- 6,500		
			<u> </u>	- 6,500 -	0.14
38	S115	Fuel poverty	- 7,000		
			<u> </u>	- 7,000 -	0.15
39	District Policing Partnership		- 1,799		
			<u> </u>	- 1,799 -	0.04
41	Works Depot	Drinking water	- 690		
		Building Maintenance contracts	2,500		
		Electricity	8,816		
		Maintenance/repairs to equipment	2,000		
			<u> </u>	12,626	0.27
42	Admin Building	Drinking water	- 2,000		
		Building Maintenance contracts	8,284		
		Cleaning Materials	2,750		

		Electricity	7,000		
		Gas	4,325		
		Maintenance/repairs to equipment	3,500		
		Rates	2,189		
			<u> </u>	26,048	0.55
43	Finance	Printing/Stationery	1,700		
		Software maintenance	2,500		
			<u> </u>	4,200	0.09
46	ICT	Software maintenance	10,000		
			<u> </u>	10,000	0.21
		20% Reduction in Staff Conferences/courses	-	6,620 -	0.14
		10% Reduction in Staff Travel/subsistence	-	7,000 -	0.15
		Salaries & Wages - pay award and pension			3.28
		Increase	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>10.00</u>

APPENDIX 4.

Party	Budget	Detail	Amount. £.
SDLP	Summer Scheme	Summer Scheme	+13,500
	Sports Developemnt	Sports Advisory Committee	+10,000
UUP	Building Control	Travel & sub + general reduction	-30,000
	Sports Grounds POS	Access to Countryside	-18,473
		Plants & Materials	-25,000
	Drumaheglis	Measures to increase profit margin	
	JDLC	Review and reduce café operating costs	
	Cultural	NW200 – retain contribution	+10,000
		Borough Arts Committee retain some contribution	
		Arts Cttee review event charges to increase income	
	Sports Development	Sports Development – remove contribution to awards	
	Sports Gnds POS	NI Milk Cup reduce contribution	
	Official & Courtesy Visits	Reduce contribution to Twinning Association	
	Staff Costs	Review overtime, holiday cover, agency costs, mileage	
BK	-	Retain overall increase to near 10%.	
	Drumaheglis	Retain services/events to level people expect and close Drumaheglis – lesser impact on community	
SF	JDLC	Reduce overall total maintenance costs – 3 lots	
		Reduce energy costs – oil/gas	
		Printing and stationery – across organization	
	TownHall	Running costs v. income – increase income	
		Reduce energy costs	
	Tourism	High cost v. low income – remove contribution to CCG	-17,500
	Conference budget Cllrs	Remove	-12,000
	Official & courtesy	Reduce	
TUV	Building Control	Reduce cost overall	
	Town Hall	Energy charges	
	Events	Reduce contribution NIMC, Summer Scheme, NW200	
DUP	All budgets	Reduce overall (detail to be advised) total 71,200	
	Town Hall	“	-4,500
	Sports Grounds POS	“	-17,300
	Tourist Facilities	“	-8,500
	Tourism	“	-1,000
	Community Services	“	-1,000
	Community Relations	“	-2,000
	Environmental Health	“	-4,400
	Home Accident Prevent	“	-,1000
	Fuel Poverty	“	-1,000
	Dog Control	“	-1,500
	Licensing	“	-150
	Public Conven.	“	-2,100
	Waste Collection	Street cleansing overall budget	-5,000
	Waste Disposal	“	-4,900
	Other Comm Assets	“	-4,000
	Minor Works	“	-4,000
	Members allowances	“	-2,000
	Corp. Mgt	“	-3,850
	Works Depot	“	-3,000
	Contributions	Across services to be included (to be settled by party)	+