

CM 920

**Ballymoney Borough Council
Council Meeting No 920 – 3rd June 2010**

3rd June 2010

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*Delegates agreed
Alderman Campbell
Councillor McCamphill
Chief Executive*

Ballymoney Borough Council

Minutes of Council Meeting No 920 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Thursday 3rd June 2010 at 3.30pm.

IN THE CHAIR: Alderman F Campbell, Mayor

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
H Connolly
C Cousley, MBE (Deputy Mayor)
J Simpson

Councillors
J Finlay
R Halliday
B Kennedy
M McCamphill
P McGuigan

APOLOGIES: **Councillors**
A Cavlan
A Patterson
E Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Director of Central & Leisure Services
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Corporate Project Officer

Press (1)

920.1 FUNDING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME – RESPONSE TO MINISTER’S LETTER

The Mayor welcomed members to the meeting and invited the Chief Executive to outline the business of the meeting.

The Chief Executive advised members that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Minister’s letter to NILGA dated 28th May (previously circulated) to NILGA in advance of NILGA’s meeting on 4th June 2010 to discuss a formal local government response.

The Chief Executive also referred members to a paper (Appendix 1) considered by the Causeway Coast & Glens Transition Committee at a meeting earlier in the day.

The Mayor invited views from members on the proposal contained in the Minister’s letter.

Members responded, raising a number of concerns including:

- The lack of detailed information from the Minister and certainty that the efficiency savings referred to can be made.
- The short timescale for a response to be considered.
- The implications for ratepayers if local government funds reform.
- If money is to be borrowed to fund reform then this should be done by central government and not by local councils.
- The decision on local government reform should be taken by the Executive.

Councillor McGuigan left the meeting at 4.00pm

920.2 NILGA INVITATION TO ATTEND MEETING

NILGA wrote to Chief Executives on 1st June inviting Chief Executives and two elected members (preferably one of which should be the Mayor or Chairperson) to a meeting on 4th June 2010, to discuss the Minister's letter to the Chair of NILGA.

The Chief Executive advised members that NILGA Executive Members had also been invited and in her capacity as an observer Councillor Robinson would have already have received an invitation.

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

that the Mayor, Alderman Campbell attend the meeting on 4th June 2010.

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

that Councillor McCamphill attend the meeting on 4th June 2010.

The consensus to be put forward by Council's delegates at the NILGA meeting on 4th June 2010 should be that the issue of funding local government reform lies with central government.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 4.30pm.

Appendix 1 – Paper considered by Causeway Coast & Glens Transition Committee on 3rd June 2010

Paper considered by Causeway Coast & Glens Transition Committee 3/6/10

BACKGROUND

- Members have received a copy of the letter from the Minister to NILGA re funding for the up front cost of implementation.
- Important that the correct response goes back to the Minister
- Local government has much to benefit from the reform programme – including efficiencies and cost reductions for the ratepayers.
- Savings can come from a range of areas including, joint working, staffing, procurement etc.
- There is a need to invest to be able to deliver improved services and to achieve efficiencies – e.g. procurement of new technology/severance etc.
- LG should not be afraid of this, provided it is done on a proper business case. Therefore savings accrued should be passed on to the ratepayer in the cluster area.

NILGA PRINCIPLES

- The reform process should be cost neutral to the ratepayer as promised at the outset of the reform process and that any rate rise to the ratepayer must be avoided.
- Where there is no financial benefit to local government, costs should be met by central government.
- Councils may contribute where benefits will be accrued. Contribution should be apportioned based on the level of benefit gained.
- Central government should fund activities where equity across the sector is required (e.g. Elected Member and Officer Severance Schemes).
- The final programme costs and the apportionment must be negotiated based on a robust and mutually agreed business case.
- The final programme costs must be affordable.
- Repayment of any loans from central government to local government should only be considered when councils have made demonstrable savings.

KEY DECISION:

Local government is being asked to consider if it will fund the full up front cost of implementation.

The PWC report made a number of recommendations and concluded that an investment of £118m would yield efficiencies of approx £438m over a 25 year period. These proposals included a BSO, new single waste authority and new local government association

The report and conclusions were rejected by local government who prepared a response based on collaboration and efficiencies which the Minister is currently considering.

RESPONSE:

Local Government is being requested to fund the full up front cost of implementation of RPA. Whilst there is an absence of clarity as to what is being proposed, the Transition Committee should positively respond subject to clarification as to the exact detail of the implementation proposals and how this would be funded.

Examples of clarification include:

- Facility to borrow from consolidated loans fund
- Convergence of rates
- LG only to fund costs that will lead to savings to local rate payers

Members may wish to consider the consequences of a failure to communicate a qualified positive response to the request.