

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Items deferred to committees for further consideration.

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Minutes of Meeting No. 931 held, "in committee", in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney, on Monday 8th November 2010 at 2.04pm.

In the Chair: Councillor B Kennedy (Mayor)

Present:

Aldermen:
F Campbell
C Cousley, MBE (Deputy Mayor)
J Simpson

Councillors:
R Halliday
M McCamphill
A Patterson
E Robinson
I Stevenson

Apologies:
A Cavlan
H Connolly
J Finlay
P McGuigan
C McLaughlin
T McKeown
M Storey, MLA

In attendance: Chief Executive
Director of Borough Services
Director of Central & Leisure Services
Corporate Project Officer
Committee Clerk

931.1 RATE ESTIMATE 2011-12

Before proceeding to consider Version 2 of the Rates book the Chief Executive advised members that Version 2, previously circulated to members, was the first book members had seen as Version 1 was prepared to allow the management team to consider before providing members with the most accurate estimates of known and quantifiable increases faced next year. The Chief Executive stressed that Council face other increases outside its control including the resources element of General Grant, which may be cut.

He referred to Council's direction to management to "aim to produce a rate estimate at 0% increase." The Chief Executive explained that officers were continuing to try to achieve that and that the meeting gave an opportunity to explain what factors are pushing the estimate upwards. It would also allow members to clarify any of these increases and to suggest areas to look at to find offsetting savings.

The Chief Executive advised that some of the increases are imposed on Council from outside. For example, it is estimated that it will cost £36,500 to pay for the election next year. Some of the increases are choices that are made as a council. An example of that is the £20,000 included for Planning Consultancy to help object to the Northern Area Plan at the Examination in Public. Council could choose not to contest the Plan and save that cost.

In closing the Chief Executive said that the task of getting down to a 0% increase would not be easy, but none of the last few years had been easy. He expressed the wish that Council would have a constructive discussion today and begin to identify the cuts which members will accept to the existing cost base of council.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Executive for his comments and invited the Director of Central & Leisure Services to present the summary of the analysis of the increase in the 2011/12 Rates.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services presented Version 2 of the Rates Estimates Book 2011/12 together with the summary analysis of the increase, with notes detailing other areas which may require budgetary provision in 2011/12 (Appendix 1). She advised members that the increase on the district rate at this stage is 9.39%, however, the Corporate Management Team is investigating areas where savings can be achieved in an attempt to bring the rate increase down to the level agreed by Council. She also drew members' attention to the majority of budgets where there was no increase at all.

The Director of Central and Leisure Services outlined the summary of proposed budget increases some of which were outside Council's control e.g. general grant in year cut, salaries and wages, the local election in May 2011. She proceeded to address each increase in turn providing further explanations for each.

Referring to the estimated penny product the Director advised that it will be the end of November before this is known. She also advised that some government departments may also reduce the level of grants available to Councils e.g. community relations, DPP, and CSP.

Referring to the reduced income from some services e.g. JDLC the Director advised that Council may have to review the level of income as the rates process continues.

The Mayor invited members' questions on the summary presented by the Director.

Members requested further information on the following issues and engaged in lengthy debate during which officers responded to various issues including

- **Waste Disposal**
Disposal of green waste, mandatory recycling targets, disadvantages of withdrawing a recycling stream and haulage charges.
- **NILAS targets**
2012/12 is a landfill directive year and local authorities found to be non compliant could face infraction for failing to meet targets.
- **NWRWMG Infrastructural project**
Costs would not be known until late summer 2011.
- **Improvement Collaboration Efficiency Programme (ICE)**
Savings from the ICE programme will not be delivered for a number of years and depend on voluntary collaboration between councils.
- **Christmas Lights**
Following discussion on the extent and number of Christmas lights and the tendering process members agreed that it would be useful to get the views of other partners i.e. the Chamber of Commerce. The Director of Borough Services suggested that it would be useful to ascertain Council's view first and then speak to partners.

It was proposed by Alderman Campbell, seconded by Councillor Patterson and **AGREED:**

to defer the issue of Christmas lights for further consideration at the November meeting of the Leisure & Amenities Committee.

- **Economic Development Village Plans/projects, Townscape Heritage Project**
Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Halliday and **AGREED:**

to defer further discussion on the village plans/projects and Townscape Heritage Project to the November meeting of the Development committee.

- **Upgrade IT equipment**
The upgrade is to equipment in the Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre. It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Halliday and **AGREED:**

to defer further discussion on the upgrade of IT equipment to the November meeting of the Corporate & Central Services committee.

- **Consultancy fee Northern Area Plan**
The cost of consultancy will become clearer following Council's workshop with the consultant on Thursday 11th November.
- **Building Control Income**
Councils cannot set their own building control charges. The management team will consider suggestions made by members.
- **Further options for managing vacancies**
The management team will consider further options for managing vacancies and staffing levels.
- **Amalgamation of DPP and CSP**
Any proposed changes would not have an impact on the incoming financial year.

The Mayor left the meeting at 4.05pm. The Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

- **Capital projects (loan charges) 2011/12**
 - a. **Refurbishment projects JLDC**
Referring to the 3 refurbishment projects at the Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre the Director of Central & Leisure Services advised that members have all the information to date on these projects.

The Mayor returned to the meeting at 4.09pm and took the Chair.

- b. **Refuse Collection Vehicles**
In relation to the 2 refuse collection vehicles the Director of Borough Services advised members that he can re-examine the costs of the refuse collection vehicles and the options available to ensure members have the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Members **AGREED:**

to defer further discussion on the 2 refuse collection vehicles and the JLDC refurbishment to the next meeting of the relevant committees.

- **Current year's capital projects**
No loans in respect of the current year's capital projects have been drawn down. The Director of Borough Services advised that Council has yet to decide to progress to the tender stage. Members **AGREED:**

to defer further discussion on the current year's capital projects to the November meeting of the Leisure & Amenities committee.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

Appendix A – Summary analysis of increase in 2011/12 rates.

Rates Estimates 2011/2012

Attached is Rates Estimates 2011/12 Book Version 2. This is the first book issued to members. The estimates presented in the book include for known and quantifiable costs at this stage. Below is a summary analysis of the increase in the 2011/12 Rates. Also included are notes detailing other areas which may require budgetary provision in 2011/12. The increase on the district rate at this stage is 9.39%, however the Corporate Management Team is investigating areas where savings can be achieved in an attempt to bring the rate increase down the level agreed by council.

Analysis of Increase

			<u>%</u>
General Grant - In Year Cut		60,904	1.06
Salaries & Wages	Pension, NIC, JE Appeals	50,821	0.88
Election	Local election May 2011	36,500	0.64
NAP Consultancy		20,000	0.35
Economic Development	Village Plans/projects	89,667	
	Townscape heritage project	<u>16,000</u>	1.84
Building Maintenance Contracts	Increased	2%	
Electricity/Gas	Increased	5%	
Rates	Increased	3%	
DPP	Recruit Independent Members	5,000	ne t
SGPOS	Christmas Lights	5,000	
	Bonfire Site Clearance	4,000	
Tourist Facilities	Lower Neagh & Lower Bann	-2,500	
Waste Disposal	Landfill Tax	83,160	
	Haulage	31,879	
	Disposal Charges	-70,285	
	Waste Management Partnership	5,000	
	Green Waste	24,603	

Contributions to other bodies	Increased	3%	
Non Distributed Costs - pensions	Increased	3%	2.05
Landfill Site Provision	For 60 years aftercare costs	87,500	1.53
Capital Projects - Loan Charges	2 Refuse Collection Vehicles - £260k	32,068	
	JDLC Refurbishment projects - £250k	19,105	
	Upgrade IT Equipment - £39k	8,057	1.04
Increase			9.39

Notes

Members attention is drawn to the undernoted items which may result in an increase on the district rates but which at this stage insufficient reliable information is available to establish a realistic budget for 2011/12.

1. Councils allocation of General Grant - Resources element is not yet known. The grant included in the Rates Book v 2 is the allocation for 2010/11.
2. The 2011/12 Estimated Penny Product has not yet been advised by LPS. The 10/11 EPP is used in the Rates Book V 2.
3. Reduced Level of other government grants for 2011/12.
4. Reduced Income levels from various services.
5. Actual cost of current years capital projects
6. Running costs of new community facilities
7. Revenue cost of NWHWMG Infrastructural project
8. Additional cost of closure of landfill site depending on advice from NIEA
9. NILAS Targets - due to a further step change in the councils NILAS target for 2012/13 (a Landfill Directive year); on the councils present performance in respect of diverting waste from landfill it is likely that council will exceed its 2012/13 NILAS target by some 1,000 tonnes; which may result in it having to pay a fine of £150,000 (1000 tonne x £150/tonne)
10. Compliance with legislative requirements - sustainable development and carbon reduction.

I. McCleery
03.11.10

