

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Council Meeting No 933 – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010**

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of Council Meeting No 933 held "in committee" in the Council Chamber, Riada House, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010 at 2pm.

**IN THE CHAIR:** The Mayor, Councillor Bill Kennedy

**PRESENT:** **Aldermen**  
F Campbell  
H Connolly  
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor

**Councillors**  
A Cavlan  
J Finlay  
R Halliday  
A Patterson  
E Robinson  
I Stevenson

**APOLOGIES:** Alderman J Simpson  
Councillor M McCamphill  
Councillor P McGuigan  
Councillor C McLaughlin

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive  
Director of Borough Services  
Assistant Director Borough Services  
Head of Corporate and Development Services

**933.1 RATES ESTIMATE 2011/12**

The purpose of the meeting is to give consideration to the rate estimate for the year commencing April 2011.

Director of Central and Leisure Services presented the following documents, circulated, to members with the agenda for the meeting:

1. General Estimate of Rates 2011/12, attached as Appendix A, at a total net cost of £5,923,996, with a net amount to be raised of £5,949,117 after adding bank charges and applying general grant, giving a domestic rate increase of 0.0118p or 3.55%;
2. General estimate of rates comparisons 2010/11–2011/12;
3. Analysis 07/12/2010 of reductions to version 2 of the rate estimate book detailing the elements contributing to the reduction of 3.55% to version 2 of the rates book and including explanatory notes on the various items.

The Chief Executive referred to the revised loan charges following review by management (Note 2) and explained that the two replacement refuse

collection vehicles had been removed from the capital programme on the basis that Council would commit to making budget provision in 2011/12 for a replacement of a one-person operated vehicle in 2012/13.

Director of Central and Leisure Services highlighted note 6 regarding government grants and advised that while the level of grants for funded programmes had been included at the 2010/11 levels, as was the case last year, some would not be confirmed by the government departments until after the rate estimate had been settled.

The Mayor commended the management team on the significant reduction of almost 6p since the last estimate (version 2).

The Chief Executive stated that while good progress had been made on identifying savings he was aware council had directed a 0% increase and work was continuing. Other potential areas to be examined had been identified and the management team would meet again in January to review budgets. At this point in time he hoped that any issue with the present proposed savings could be discussed and agreement reached on where savings could or could not be made. This would give a firm basis to go forward. An indication from members of any areas where members would wish to see further savings made would be useful.

\* **Councillor Finlay joined the meeting at this stage 2.25pm.**

During the ensuing debate a range of issues engaged members' attention including:

- Impact on services of budgets reduced last year;
- Comments on Facebook on "in committee" discussion which a member took exception to, asserting that these were impacting on staff morale;
- Prospect of information on assembly budget being available before rate estimate finalised;
- Money which could be expected to be brought in from vacant properties, noting all empty homes to be rated with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010;
- Update on work by building control officers regarding vacant properties and assurance from Land and Property Services (LPS) that they will endeavour to match data on properties with other utilities following which any outstanding addresses will be passed to Council for Council follow up. Noted Building Control Officers doing commercial properties and work had not started on domestic properties, with LPS prioritizing debt recovery rather than pursuing vacancies;
- Prospect of savings from Transition Committee (TC) collaborative initiatives;
- Initiatives designed to reduce tonnage on waste disposal which might be considered;
- Rising cost of diesel and heating oil;
- Lobby to reduce reduction in general grant.

There followed a debate on the Capital budget provision for community facilities, the request for a MUGA at Glebeside to be considered, the community facility not proceeding at Cloughmills with a play facility substituted.

Issues raised which the Director of Central and Leisure services confirmed would be examined were;

- Vacancies, structure and opening hours, level of take up of facilities and potential to increase income at Leisure Centre. She confirmed that a report on operating costs etc would be brought to committee.

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

***that the suggested reductions to version 2 of the rates Book set out in the appendix to these minutes be accepted with the exception of £15,691 loan charges for community buildings to be removed and the budget retained at original level set by Council (revising estimated increase to 3.82% or thereabouts), the Leisure and Amenities Committee to further consider the Amenities Capital projects at the next committee meeting.***

Noted RPi 5%, CPI 3%

This being all the business the meeting closed at 3.15pm.

**Appendix A:** General Estimate of Rates 2011/12