

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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**Minutes of Meeting No. 936 held, “*in committee*”, in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney, on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at 2.00pm.**

**In the Chair:** Alderman C Cousley, MBE (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillor B Kennedy (Mayor) from \*\*

**Present:** **Aldermen:**  
F Campbell  
H Connolly  
C Cousley, MBE (Deputy Mayor)  
J Simpson

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

**Apologies:**  
A Cavlan  
J Finlay  
P McGuigan  
C McLaughlin  
M Storey, MLA

**In attendance:** Chief Executive  
Director of Borough Services  
Director of Central & Leisure Services  
Head of Corporate & Development Services

**936.1 RATE ESTIMATE 2011-12**

Version 4 of the Rate Estimates Book, 10/1/2011, circulated, together with analysis of proposed reductions to version 3 of the book (copy of analysis attached as appendix A).

Introducing the revised budgets the Chief Executive indicated that inflation at November 2010 was 3.3% and updated figure would not be available until mid January.

He drew attention to increase in staff training budget explaining that in the current year the budget had been based on the assumption council was in its final year and the new Council would take responsibility for training staff. Training and subsistence had been increased (in corporate management, environmental health, finance and HR) to ensure essential services continued to be delivered and current year's budget had been reduced more than was justified.

- **Councillor McKeown and Alderman Simpson joined the meeting at this stage, time 2.10 p.m.**

In response to members' questions officers advised that no offer had been made by employers on wages and salaries but the trade union had a claim lodged. Details of categories of essential corporate training were given.

**\*\* The Mayor, Councillor Kennedy arrived and assumed the Chair.**

The Director of Central & Leisure Services referred members to the analysis, Appendix A, and the explanatory notes, advising that the rate increase had reduced from 3.55% to 2.49%. Commenting on the reduction in loan charges and cultural services she advised that the cost of replacement filters at the swimming pool had reduced from £75k to £60k, while the Causeway Museum Service (CMS) contribution had been reduced to £12k, providing for a contribution of £10k for delivery of Peace III programmes by CMS and £2000 for Ballymoney Museum programmes, the Council having indicated last year its intention to withdraw from CMS on a value for money basis.

Discussion ensued on the proposal to withdraw from the CMS and the adverse impact this might have, in members' view, on the exhibitions programme at Ballymoney Museum and collaborative working with the councils in CMS and commitment to HLF re staffing levels for Museum Service. It was suggested that since CMS had sold the benefits of membership to Leisure & Amenities Committee, the CMS should be asked to meet with the committee to address the Committee's value for money concerns.

Councillor Robinson, as Chair of CMS, advised that the Committee had not met since last Spring. She explained that the funding agreement with CMS had been for a period of time and this had come to an end. The proposal to retain a contribution of £10k to CMS would ensure delivery of the Peace programme, while some regional activities would not be taking place. She maintained that there were valid reasons for reducing the contribution while retaining the Peace III commitments made (£10k). Work on most of the exhibitions in Ballymoney Museum was done in-house by Council staff.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services confirmed that Committee had considered withdrawal last year but had to give 12 months' notice. The funding agreement expired on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 and Coleraine Borough Council had commissioned consultants to review the organization. The CMS role in delivering Peace III programmes had only commenced in the current year. Currently 25% of the CMS costs are allocated to Coleraine Borough Council for officer, management and administrative costs.

Commenting on Council commitments to HLF she explained that to satisfy HLF grant conditions Council had employed an additional member of staff and are able to undertake a substantial amount of work on its own. However, from time to time it needs specialist advice and £2k has been retained in the budget to cover this, a service previously provided by CMS but not considered value for money.

While HLF had as condition of grant that Council had the staff to man and prepare exhibitions in permanent and temporary galleries and had indicated 3, she had argued 2 were adequate.

Committee Chair, Alderman Campbell, advised that HLF had indicated that Council's application would be more favourably considered if Council were part of CMS and that was why Committee had recommended entering into an agreement with CMS.

Alderman Simpson, a member of CMS, expressed the view that given that a review had been commissioned by Coleraine Borough Council, Council should await the result of the review and consider if there was any benefits to Council before making a decision on withdrawing from the organization.

Concluding, the Chair of CMS, Councillor Robinson, said that the fact the organization had not met for 9 months has a bearing on the constitution of CMS and how money was being spent, on production of literature, should also be considered.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services advised that a full report on CMS would be tabled at Leisure & Amenities Committee when available.

The issue of landfill closure charges and building the capital fund engaged members' attention. Responding, the Chief Executive said the need to continue to build the capital fund was uncertain, meetings were ongoing to establish what was required and there may be scope to borrow money to meet increased costs. With regard to aftercare costs Council was not required in the current year to make full provision for the maximum amount but rather a contingent liability note was included in the accounts. However, Council has to produce for Department of the Environment an amended closure plan.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services referred to the provision in the incoming year for the Community Festival Fund and advised that DCAL had offered £4000 on condition Council matched this amount. (Total £8000)

- **Councillor Halliday left the meeting at 2.50pm.**

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

***that Council retains the Community Festival Fund and provide match funding of £4000.***

Information on the beneficiaries of the Community Festival Fund is to be provided for next meeting of the Leisure & Amenities Committee.

On economic development new provision to match village plans(4) and village projects (2) funded by the rural development programme was included, while a contribution of £16,000 would support the proposal to HLF for funding of £1.2M for the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

A range of other issues raised by members included:-

- Leisure contributions including contributions to groups towards use of Council facilities.
- Christmas Lights contract extended in current year in the light of implementation of RPA, but need now to specify, advertise, evaluate and let new contract. Noted a number of features taken out to reduce cost, new poles erected and need to examine current anchor points. It was suggested the operation of the lights

- scheme be reviewed and the Mayor said this matter should be debated at Leisure & Amenities Committee.
- Disposal charges – Director of Borough Services will provide information on figures which are being reassessed.
  - Haulage costs – currently out to tender and tender price to be available for January Committee meeting, will be included.
  - Brown bins – no new scheme proposed for next financial year or other means of recycling.
  - Green waste shredding – operation brought to end following NIEA challenge. Has to be removed from Brown Bin scheme and Civic Amenity site to licensed processor at greater cost than in-house operation.
  - Recycling glass – will cost money (manpower and equipment).
  - Planning consultancy – saving through collaborative working with Limavady Borough Council.
  - Vacant property exercise – LPS queries re non-domestic being dealt with. LPS focus on debt recovery rather than processing information.
  - Bonfires – details of bonfires on Council and non-Council land and cost, now overspent, to protect Council's interest from Health & Safety perspective, to be supplied to Health & Environmental Services Committee.
  - Waste Income – Director of Borough Services advised that in the light of information coming to hand the budget cannot be agreed on the basis of bringing in the same amount as last year. No bins to sell and in current economic downturn trade waste income not being achieved with substantial customers going elsewhere.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Alderman Campbell

***that council accepts all changes in budgets set out in the analysis in Appendix A with exception of corporate training which management was asked to review again.***

As an amendment it was proposed by Councillor McCamphill, seconded by Alderman Connolly

***that Council accepts all the changes in budgets set out in analysis in Appendix A.***

On being put to the meeting the amendment was lost 2 for and 5 against and the motion passed – 5 for and none against.

Next meeting

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

***that the date of the next meeting be changed from 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011 to 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 7.00pm.***

**The meeting closed at 4.30pm.**

**Appendix A – Rates Estimates 2011/12 Version 4 Analysis of Reduction to Version 3 Rates Estimates**

**Rates Estimates 2011/2012 - Version 4**  
**Analysis of Reduction to Version 3, Rates Estimates**

			<u>Saving</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Rates Increase in Version 3</b>				<b>3.55</b>
General Grant	Derating Element	- £7,467		
	Resources Element	+£83,064	75,597	-1.31
Loan Charges	10/11 Community facilities - loan charges reinstated	+15691		
	11/12 loan charges revised re JDLC swimming pool project	-1147	14,544	0.26
Salaries & Wages	Adjustments re 2010 pay		8,061	-0.14
Cultural Services - Museum	Contribution to Causeway Museum Service		6,500	-0.11
Corporate Management	Corporate Training		10,000	0.17
Environmental Health, Corporate Management, Finance & HR	Travel & Subsistence		4,320	0.07
<b>Proposed Rates Increase - V. 4</b>			<hr/> <b>2.49</b> <hr/>	

**Notes**

1. General Grant - Resources Element - The Department has issued indicative figures for 2011/2012 based on the Northern Ireland Executive draft Budget. The Resources element of the grant will be confirmed once the draft budget is agreed by the Executive and approved by the Assembly.

2.. Loan Charges - in 2010/11 loan charges of £77,645 were included in Estimates for Community Buildings.

This was to fund loans amounting to £1,125,000 to be repaid over 10, 20 and 30 years.

This full loan charges figure is included in Version 4 of the Rates Book.

The estimated cost of the swimming pool filtration project has been revised to £60,000 resulting in a saving in loan charges of £1,147

3. Salaries & Wages - the salaries and wages budgets include 0.5% pay award for 2011 and 1% increase in employers pension contribution for 2011/12.
4. The council has not yet received information from Departments regarding other government grants e.g. community services, community relations, DPP, Community Safety, etc. The level of grants received in 2010/11 are included in Version 4 of the Rates Book.