

**Ballymoney Borough Council  
Corporate & Central Services  
Meeting No: 352 – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

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**Ballymoney Borough Council  
Corporate & Central Services Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting No 352 held in Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at 7.30 pm**

**IN THE CHAIR:** A Patterson

**PRESENT**

**Aldermen**  
F Campbell  
H Connolly  
C Cousley (Vice Chair)

**Councillors**  
J Finlay  
I Stevenson  
M Storey, MLA  
R Wilson  
E Robinson

**APOLOGIES**

A Cavlan  
P McGuigan, MLA  
D McKay

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Chief Executive  
Items [1-8]  
Director of Central & Leisure Services  
Items [9-10 ]  
Committee Clerk

**352.1 MINUTES OF MEETING NO 351 – 22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 2007**

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

*to recommend to Council that the minutes of meeting no. 351 – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2007 be approved.*

**352.2 SOMME ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE**

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

*to recommend to Council to permit the Deputy Mayor attend the Annual Somme Annual Pilgrimage.*

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### 352.3 STAFF MATTERS

The Chief Executive reported that the Director of Borough Services had raised a matter referring to the works supervisor who had assumed additional duties in relation to the cemetery from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001. It had been agreed in 2002 that his job description be amended and an evaluation carried out but this had not happened.

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Wilson and **AGREED:**

***to recommend to council to ask Belfast City Council to carry out a job evaluation on the post of works supervisor as a desktop exercise.***

### 352.4 CONTRIBUTION – KNOCKAGH WAR MEMORIAL

In September 2006 Carrickfergus Borough Council requested Council to commit to a contribution of up to £4,000 towards the cost of repair works to the above monument. Council agreed (FC334.12) to contribute to the project but on a proportionate basis based on valuation. Work has now been completed and the cost per Council is £3,059. All other Councils paid an equal share, apart from Moyle who decided not to contribute further monies, and Council is now invited to contribute £3,059.

During discussion, Committee agreed that they would like to write to Carrickfergus Borough Council to ask why the amount requested was not proportionate, adding that Committee would not be in a position financially to contribute again. Councillor Storey added that while the work done was valuable and it was well worth protecting and preserving the Co. Antrim memorial, which commemorated people in this Borough who died during the War, committee should reiterate that if there be any further request, it be made in good time in order to consider contributing to it financially.

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

***to recommend to council to pay the contribution amount of £3,059 and to write to Carrickfergus Borough Council airing concern for future contributions.***

**Councillor Storey left the meeting at 7.50pm.**

Now that the monument, which commemorates those who paid the supreme sacrifice from County Antrim during the Great War 1914-1918, has been renovated, as an extension to this project the Knockagh Joint Committee has decided to embark on compiling a "Book Of Honour". The book will record all those from County Antrim who fell during the First World War and will be compiled by Councillor Frazer Agnew and be produced in partnership with the Somme Association at Conlig.

The Committee wish to seek approval in principle from each Council within the County that they:

- (a) will participate in the compilation of the information for the book
- (b) each Council nominate an officer as a point of contact for Councillor Agnew

No financial support is being sought as it is envisaged that funding will be available from other sources.

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

***to recommend to council that since Council has a comprehensive roll of honour that it agree in principle to participate in the project and that the Chief Executive nominate a council contact from the Office of the Chief Executive.***

### **352.5 NILGA CONSULTATION ON THE WAY FORWARD**

Following the recent round of NILGA visits to Councils the Association has issued a consultation document, previously circulated to members, seeking views on the implications for NILGA within the modernization of local government and RPA implementation. To facilitate responses a response template has also been provided. The closing date for comments is 30<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

It was agreed that the matter be deferred for one month and then tabled at the March meeting; NILGA to be advised that Council's response will be sent in after the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007.

### **352.6 NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

The Secretary of State has announced his decision to launch the recruitment exercise for the independent members of the NI Policing Board and to bring forward legislation to facilitate this exercise. The draft legislation must come into operation by 26<sup>th</sup> March and is subject to affirmative resolution.

### **352.7 EQIA CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

(a) – Street Naming Policy  
Council at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007 adopted a policy on Naming of Streets and Numbering of Properties. This has been posted on the website. The Borough Services Directorate has responsibility for the function.

(b) – Flags & Emblems on Council Property  
The EQIA document has now been finalised and will be issued for public consultation in early March.

**Councillor Finlay left the meeting at 8.10pm**

### 352.8 THE FUTURE OF PATHOLOGY SERVICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has issued for public consultation the recommendations of the review of pathology services in Northern Ireland.

In 2003 the Department Commissioned the review of pathology services in Northern Ireland. The report of the review examines the current provision of pathology services and makes recommendations for the future provision of these services.

The recommendations are detailed in the Executive Summary (copy circulated).

The closing date for comments is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

Based on information from a public meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007, the Chief Executive presented the following report:

“A key proposal affecting Causeway Hospital is the total removal of microbiology service and downgrading of integrated clinical biochemistry and haematology from a current 24-hour daily cover to 12-hour daily, with out-of-hours urgent samples transferred to nearest large acute hospital laboratory (Altnagelvin or Antrim).

Council is concerned for a number of reasons:

- This will downgrade the service to patients at Causeway and add delay to the analysis of samples, due to the additional travelling time. The absence of a complete dual carriageway route to either of the nearest hospitals or to Belfast means that journey times are extremely variable and subject to significant delays when major works lead to closure of single carriageway routes and diversion onto unsuitable side roads.
- There is a suggestion that more testing can be done in ward (point of care testing or POCT) but in an acute hospital this cannot be a substitute for a full laboratory service available 24-hours daily.
- While the report states that 59% of pathology services in Northern Ireland are not fully accredited, the existing laboratory at Causeway is recognised as a high quality facility which is fully accredited and therefore is able to attract high quality staff. It has no staff shortages at present. A downgrading of the laboratory, coupled with the peripherality of the hospital to Belfast, threatens the long-term ability to retain and recruit such highly skilled professional staff.
- Reduction in the standard of pathology service on site at Causeway threatens the security of other existing services and the long term development potential of new services dependent on this specialism. The future of Causeway as a fully fledged acute hospital is, therefore, in jeopardy.
- After a long battle by the local Councils, it was accepted that the development of a new hospital at Causeway was the best option for patients in the area. Campaigns to save cherished local hospitals were reluctantly abandoned in return for a fully functioning acute hospital for the region. This proposal jeopardises the promises made to local people and threatens a further erosion of local provision”.

For these reasons Council rejects the proposal to downgrade the pathology service at Causeway to 12-hours daily from the present level of 24-hours daily.

Councillor Stevenson read a response in the form of a letter from Noel Graham, Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Council (attached as Appendix A).

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Robinson and **AGREED**:

***to recommend to Council to adopt the comments set out above and to endorse the comments made in the NIHSSC response to the Review, set out in appendix A.***

**Councillor Robinson left the meeting at 8.25pm  
Chief Executive left the meeting at 8.25pm**

## **CENTRAL SERVICES**

### **352.9 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for period 11, 2006/07 drawn on the Council's Revenue & Capital Bank Accounts were circulated at the meeting.

After discussion it was proposed by Alderman Connolly, seconded by Councillor Stevenson and **AGREED**:

***to recommend to Council that accounts to the value of £557,582.82 Revenue Account and £237,794.96 from the Capital Account be approved for payment.***

### **352.10 COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES**

The Department has confirmed the new package of allowances effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 – Circular No: LG/03/07 previously circulated.

The Attendance Allowance is abolished and an enhanced Basic Allowance is payable.

The Director advised that further guidance has been sought particularly with regard to the Dependents' Carers' Allowance.

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Stevenson, seconded by Councillor Campbell and **AGREED**:

***to recommend to council to defer any decision for one month.***

**This being all the business the meeting closed at 9.05pm**

**Appendix A:** Letter from Noel Graham, NIHSSC, (copy reproduced).

# **APPENDIX A**



21 February 2007

Dreena Evans  
Secondary Care Directorate  
Room 14, Annexe 1  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3SQ

Dear Dreena,

### **The Future of Pathology Services in Northern Ireland**

This document acknowledges the importance of pathology services to the clinical work within health services. It highlights the fact that 75% of all diagnosis made in hospital depends on the availability of pathology tests. Demand has increased significantly and increasingly the clinical component of pathology is identified as a priority in providing patient care.

The pressures on the services to reduce waiting lists, minimize trolley waits, admit quickly, identify and deal with HCAI's, etc underpin the value and importance of accessible and efficient on site pathology services.

This Council then fails to see the rationale for proposals which aim to reduce the local pathology services at Antrim and Causeway hospitals.

Are there not circumstances where fast pathology responses are required mid-operation to determine tissue or cell malignancy before proceeding?

Is it not the case that the pathologist will come to some clinics and perform biopsies?

Antrim Hospital is a designated cancer unit and Council is of the opinion that the proposals will adversely affect its cancer service which will ultimately lead to an inequality in diagnosis for patients of Northern area.

Numerous strategies in the past few years highlight the importance of multi-disciplinary working and reviewing of patient cases. Council would support the continued input from pathologists in such working relationships.

The rate at which clinicians have quick access to pathology reports can impact on diagnosis and treatment. In Causeway hospital the proposals must have serious implications amongst others for matching bloods in haemorrhaging cases, analyses of samples and delay in antibiotic regimes for suspected meningitis, identifying, isolation and control of patients with MRSA, C.diff, etc.

In addition there is the wider Northern area community impact if services are reduced at Antrim and Causeway. The document refers to the high number of pathology rests in some areas required by primary care.

This Council is currently raising issues with the Minister, Board and NI Ambulance Trust about response times below targets in emergency cases. It takes longer to get people to hospital in rural areas and Council would not wish to see further delays in diagnosis or treatment at hospital due to the unavailability of local pathology services.

JPD/IMcC/SAD

It has been relayed to Council that in some areas these proposals are viewed as contributing towards a future reduction or demise of certain hospital A&E services.

There are other issues not covered in depth around adverse weather conditions particularly in winter affecting the road between Causeway and Altnagelvin, increase in carbon emissions, influx of tourists in summer and injuries attributed to sporting events, etc.

The Northern Health and Social Services Council position is clear. The Council supports the retention of local pathology services at fully accredited laboratories. The demand for services will increase so workforce planning is important so that the necessary resources, skills and manpower are available to provide local pathology services on site.

Yours sincerely

**NOEL GRAHAM**  
**CHIEF OFFICER**