

Ballymoney Borough Council

Corporate & Central Services Meeting No 362 – 28th January 2008

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE & CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No 362 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 28th January 2008 at 6.30 pm.

IN THE CHAIR Alderman J Simpson

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell
H Connolly
C Cousley

Councillors
A Cavlan
J Finlay
M McCamphill
E Robinson

APOLOGIES

Councillors
P McGuigan
D McKay, MLA
M Storey, MLA
R Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
Head of Finance & IT
Head of Corporate & Development Services
Committee Clerk

362.1 PRESENTATION - COMPASS ADVOCACY NETWORK LTD

It had been arranged for Compass to make a presentation to Council relating to:

- [a] use of Chamber for meetings of a Proposed Shadow Council
- [b] that council host an annual training day for the Shadow Council.
Committee agreed that they be invited to make a presentation on the proposal.

This presentation was postponed as representatives were unable to attend due to personal reasons. The presentation is to be scheduled for next meeting of Committee.

362.2 MINUTES – MEETING NO 361 –20TH DECEMBER 2007

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

to recommend that the minutes of Meeting No 361 – 20TH December 2007, as circulated, be approved.

Councillor Finlay advised the Chair that he wished to discuss an additional item relating to Single Status. It was agreed that this could be dealt with under Staff Matters.

CORPORATE SERVICES**363.3 CORPORATE PLAN**

A draft Corporate Plan 2007-2011, circulated, has been developed through consultation with Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Heads of Service (HOSg). The document has been agreed by CMT and HOSg and is presented for committee's consideration and endorsement.

* **Alderman Cousley joined the meeting at 6.35 pm.**

Councillor Finlay expressed the view that the plan be the subject of an 'Away Day' to facilitate further consideration.

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

to recommend that endorsement of the Corporate Plan be deferred pending an 'Away Day' to facilitate further consideration, date to be confirmed.

363.4 STAFF MATTERS

The Chief Executive reported on the following issues:

4.1 Evaluation

Earlier this year Belfast City Council Business Improvement Section was commissioned to undertake a job evaluation of a revised job description for the post of Project Monitoring Officer to cover support services required to be delivered to the LSP to the closure of the peace

programme in December 2008. The evaluated grade for the post is Scale 5. The cost of this post will be met from within the existing budget for LSP support services provided by Council to LSP under a service level agreement.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the evaluated grade recommended by Belfast City Council Business Improvement Section be approved.

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

to recommend that Council approve the evaluated grade as recommended by Belfast City Business Council

4.2 Application for unpaid leave

An application has been received from the temporary full-time committee clerk for special unpaid leave of up to three months from 1st February 2008. It is **RECOMMENDED** that the application be granted on compassionate grounds. Arrangements will be made to cover the duties of the post in the interim period.

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

to recommend that the temporary full-time Committee Clerk be granted unpaid leave for up to three months from 1st February 2008.

4.3 New Starts/Leavers

Details of New Starts & Leavers from 27.11.07 – 23.01.08 are attached as Appendix 1.

At the request of Councillor Finlay, the Chief Executive advised that staff may apply for a career break of up to 12 months, with an additional one year extension.

4.4 Single Status

In response to a question by Councillor Finlay the Chief Executive commented on legal and audit advice on equal pay issues. He advised that when Council adopted the Belfast City Council Report, it agreed that all Single Status issues should be agreed before implementation.

The effective date, harmonization of working hours, protection arrangements and other issues were the subject of consultation with the Trade Union. A meeting between the Trade Unions and management on

30th January had been cancelled by the Trade Unions today and efforts would be made to re-arrange at an early date.

- * **Councillor Robinson joined the meeting at 6.40 pm during the discussion on this debate.**

363.5 CORPORATE WEBSITE

The upgraded Corporate website, www.ballymoney.gov.uk, was presented to members at a workshop session on 9th January. The report of this session is attached Appendix 2. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that committee give consideration to further and continuing development of the site. Council currently has an annual support contract £1500 p.a. Recommended development options include:

- improvements to structure/content
- improvements to document management
- accessibility features
- online payments
- upgrading of support package

- * **Alderman Campbell joined the meeting at 7.04 pm.**

The Head of Corporate & Development Services outlined estimated costs of improvement options and maintenance packages and undertook to provide members costed options for further consideration during the rate setting process.

363.6 COMMUNICATIONS

Rate Collection Agency have offered the facility for Council to include a rates information leaflet with rates bills. This facility was withdrawn last year. It is **RECOMMENDED** that Council take up this offer.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services clarified the cost involved for the production of leaflets, a copy of which will be circulated to members for their comments, as requested.

- * **Councillor Cavlan joined the meeting at 7.12 pm.**

363.7 NILGA STRATEGY AND SUBSCRIPTION PROPOSALS

As part of its organisational development, NILGA is in the process of drafting business plans at both strategic and operational levels. Comments are invited by 28th March.

One of the key priorities identified by the IDeA report was to strengthen communication and engagement with Councils. A draft Framework for Engagement document has been developed. This sets out NILGA services and protocols and seeks the commitment of councils to contribute to their activities. Details of proposed subscription levels have also been provided. This Council's contribution is set to increase from £4012 to £4625.

NILGA have requested to meet with Council to discuss these matters. **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that a workshop session be arranged for members to engage with NILGA.

The following documents were circulated:

- Framework of Engagement Document
- Strategic Plan 2008-2011
- Estimates
- Key Questions

It was **AGREED**:

to recommend that a workshop session be arranged for members to engage with NILGA, date to be confirmed (suggested dates 6th or 13th March).

363.8 APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Two applications have been received.

- Age Concern NI in respect of Inspirational Older People Awards 2008
- NEELB Music Service – student educational visit to Belgium

No budget provision has been made for these organisations.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED**:

to recommend that Council note the applications.

363.9 REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The following documents were circulated for information:

- [a] A report of NILGA meeting with Connor Murphy DRD Minister regarding the transfer of local roads to local government.
- [b] NILGA RPA Update 17/1/08.

- * **Councillor Robinson and the Head of Corporate & Development Services left the meeting at 7.35 pm.**

CENTRAL SERVICES

363.10 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for period 10, 2007/08 drawn on the Council's Capital & Revenue Bank Accounts were circulated.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that payment is made.

The Head of Finance & IT responded to questions by members on items of expenditure, including the cost for the purchase and erection of Christmas lights. He agreed to provide members, at the next meeting of Committee, with information on the procedure undertaken to procure new equipment and lighting. The potential for recovery of costs due to the non-operation of some of the lights, the use of Agency staff and Consultancy fees relating to the progression of schemes will be tabled for discussion at the next Leisure & Amenities Committee meeting.

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

to recommend to Council that Accounts to the value of £748,025.47 from the Revenue Account and £79,038.10 from the Capital Account be approved for payment.

363.11 NEW LOAN SANCTION ARRANGEMENTS

The following documents were circulated for members' information: Loan Sanction Approval Form, letter from DOE, Economic Appraisal Template.

These new procedures applied from 1st January 2008. The letter from DOE sets out the background. All new loan sanctions applications made to DOE from 1st January 2008 have to be made using the new procedures. These new procedures now include a more detailed application form and a new requirement in the form of an economic appraisal. The economic appraisal is a detailed piece of work, the template extends to 13 pages and this will add a substantial burden on Council Staff regarding capital projects. The new procedures now require that economic appraisals be considered at an early stage before projects are approved.

The Head of Finance & IT expressed the view that a further training session in completing appraisals would be beneficial. It is anticipated that appraisals can be carried out 'in-house' with no additional cost to Council.

363.12 REVIEW OF NILGOSC CONSTITUTION

A letter from DOE detailing the above was circulated. The Chief Executive advised that further information is being sought relating to the number of nominees and timescale for nominations to the Review Group, the first phase of which will be taking place in early/mid February and that these findings will be made available to Council at its next meeting.

363.13 ANNUAL TENDERS

The closing date for the submission of tenders for the Annual Tendering Process was Friday 23rd January. The Head of Finance & IT advised members that 54 tenders have been received for consideration and **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Chair of Committee and Head of Finance & IT be delegated to open the annual tenders received with a report on tenders to the next meeting of Council.

It was proposed by Councilor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Connolly and **AGREED:**

that the Chair of Committee and Head of Finance & IT be delegated to open the annual tenders received with a report on tenders to the next meeting of Council.

This being all the business, the meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Appendices attached

Appendix 1 - New Starts/Leavers

Appendix 2 - Corporate Website Members' Information Session

APPENDIX 1**NEW STARTS & LEAVERS FROM 27.11.07 –23.01.08****NEW STARTS**

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Start
Alison Finney	Clerical Officer	Office of Chief Executive/Borough Services	10.01.08

CAREER BREAKS

Employee	Post	Department	Date of Leave
Anne Woodrow	Committee Clerk/Administrative Assistant – Extension of career break for a further year	Office of the Chief Executive	10.08.2007

APPENDIX 2**Information Session – upgraded website****9th January 2007**

Present: Alderman H Connolly
Alderman C Cousley
Alderman J Simpson
Councillor J Finlay
Councillor M McCamphill
Councillor T McKeown
Councillor E Robinson

Head of Corporate & Development Services (HCDS)
Corporate Project Officer (CPO)
David Curry, Worldsites
Tony Rymer, Worldsites

1. WELCOME

The Head of Corporate & Development Services welcomed the members and representatives from Worldsites and thanked David Curry for his support and the significant work involved in the upgrading of www.ballymoney.gov.uk beyond the limits of his remit and budget.

She advised members that the negative publicity arising from SiteMorse league tables had already been addressed with the launch of the upgraded site. In the most recent survey the site had moved up 100 places and had overtaken larger councils both in Northern Ireland and the UK.

2. PRESENTATION

The HCDS outlined for members the reasons for the upgrade of the website.

The Corporate Project Officer gave members further information on the new look site and on issues relating to the future development of the site.

3. QUESTIONS

Members raised various issues including:

- The level of investment required to further upgrade the site to achieve higher rankings in SiteMorse tables.
- Options for development of the site to include new services for customers, including purchase of dog licences, payment of accounts, booking of facilities.
- Inclusion of members' details on site.

- Further information on statistics on visitor numbers to www.ballymoney.gov.uk

The HCDS undertook to provide members with options and associated costs for future development of the site.