

Ballymoney Borough Council

Corporate & Central Services Meeting No 369 – 27th October 2008

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

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No 369 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 27th October 2008 at 7pm.

IN THE CHAIR Alderman J Simpson

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell
H Connolly
C Cousley, Deputy Mayor

Councillors
A Cavlan
J Finlay, Mayor
M McCamphill
E Robinson
I Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
[Items 8-15]
Head of Corporate and Development Services
[Items 8-15]
Director of Central & Leisure Services
[Items 1-7]
Committee Clerk

APOLOGIES Councillor M Storey, MLA

369.1 MINUTES OF MEETING NO 368 - 22ND SEPTEMBER 2008

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

that the minutes of meeting No 368, 22nd September 2008, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

1.1 Estimated Penny Product 2008/09 (368.10)

As agreed at item 368.10 above the Director advised that officers have carried out approximately 25% of the inspections of domestic properties

currently recorded as vacant in the LPS database. The key objective was the collection of accurate occupier/owner information together with effective dates of occupation, facilitating immediate update of billing records and the issue of rates bills. She advised that LPS will continue updating their database with the information supplied and will feed this information into the Estimated Penny Product calculations.

*** Councillor Stevenson arrived at 7.12pm**

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369.2 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for Period 7, 2008/09 drawn on the Council's Revenue and Capital Bank Accounts were circulated and discussed.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the payments are made.

The Director responded to a number of Members' queries relating to various payments.

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

to recommend that accounts to the value of £664,562.28 from the Revenue Account and £182,206.83 from the Capital Account for Period 7 2008/09 be approved for payment.

369.3 FINAL ACTUAL PENNY PRODUCT 2007/08

The Director advised that the final actual penny product for 2007/08 has been calculated by Land & Property Services and an amount of £45,318.51 is due to the Council.

This amount will be paid to the Council on 1 November 2008.

369.4 RATES ESTIMATES 2009/10 – DATES FOR MEETINGS

The Director suggested the following dates for Council to meet to consider the estimates of income and expenditure for 2009/10 and to set the District Rates for 2009/10 –

20th November 2008 @ 10.30
17th December 2008 @ 10.30
14th January 2009 @ 10.30
9th February 2009 @ 19.00 to Strike the Rates

A rates book detailing all the proposed revenue expenditure and income together with a schedule of proposed capital projects will be issued in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Finlay commented that he would like the Capital schedule to include No 1 and No 2 priority capital projects only. The Director stated that she would include capital projects listed as priority 1 and 2's only and calculate a loan charge where an estimated cost of the project was available.

Councillor Cavlan advised that she would be unable to attend on 17th December 2008. It was suggested that the December meeting be changed to 10th December. The Director advised that she would check the suitability of this date and that the date could be confirmed at the Council meeting in November.

369.5 COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES – TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE

The Council in July 2008 accepted revised rates of travelling allowances for members effective from 1st April 2008.

At that time the Council also agreed to write to the Department expressing dissatisfaction at the level of the increase in light of soaring fuel costs.

The Department has recalculated the running expenses of a car based on fuel costs in mid September 2008 and have advised that the current travelling allowance rates are still adequate to cover the cost.

The Department advises that the allowance rates are reviewed annually based on running costs in January each year.

369.6 EMPLOYMENT AGENCY SERVICES – REVISED RATES

- * **Councillor Finlay left the meeting at 8.45pm.**
- * **Councillor McCamphill left the meeting at 8.45pm.**

The Council has a contract with Diamond Recruitment Group for the provision of temporary staff at set hourly rates. In light of the increase in the national minimum wage the rates had to be revised.

A schedule of the revised rates effective from week commencing 29th September 2008 was circulated.

While the Director accepted that the Diamond Recruitment Group contract was fixed, she advised that there was a clause in the contract where prices would not be changed except for legislative requirements ie: a rise in the national minimum wage.

Alderman Simpson queried the knock-on effect of the change of the minimum wage on the higher rates of pay per hour.

The Director agreed to seek clarification on the rates higher than the minimum wage and report back to committee.

369.7 NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AWARD

The Director advised that the Employers' Side of the National Joint Council had made a final offer for 08/09 of 2.45% plus an additional £100 for points 4, 5 and 6. This was not accepted by the Trade Union side and was referred to arbitration. The two sides have subsequently decided to implement the final offer with effect from 1 April 2008. In response to a query the Director advised that the additional £100 represented around 3.3% and the budgetary provision for 08/09 was 2%, with some posts having no increase.

- * **Director of Central and Leisure Services left the meeting at 8.56pm.**
- * **Chief Executive joined the meeting at 8.57pm**
- * **Head of Corporate and Development Services joined the meeting at 8.57pm.**
- * **Councillor Cavlan left the meeting at 9.00pm**
- * **Councillor Stevenson left the meeting at 9.00pm**

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369.8 EQUALITY – ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2007/08

Annual Progress Report 2007/08 to the Equality Commission on Section. 75 Duties and the new Disability Duties was presented by the Chief Executive (circulated).

- * **Councillor Cavlan rejoined the meeting at 9.01pm.**

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

to recommend that Council adopt the Annual Progress Report 2007/08 to the Equality Commission on Section 75 of the NI Act and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006.

369.9 RPA

In view of the lateness of the hour and the other business to be transacted it was **AGREED:**

that the Chief Executive will present a brief overview of Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) meeting (3rd October 2008) at the Council meeting on Monday 3rd November 2008.

If this proves a useful communication tool it is intended to follow each of the meetings with appropriate materials.

A copy of the NILGA RPA Update Paper and presentation slides were circulated.

369.10 SOLACE PAPER – A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO A SUCCESSFUL CHANGE PROGRAMME.

Solace has produced a report “A practical approach to a successful change programme.” A copy of the report had been circulated to members.

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

to recommend that Council endorse the Solace paper – A Practical Approach To A Successful Change Programme.

369.11 NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME CONSULTATION

There is a current consultation exercise in respect of proposed new pension scheme regulations which closes on 31st October. The regulations are:

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (BENEFITS, MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS) REGULATIONS (NI) 2008
2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (ADMINISTRATION) REGULATIONS (NI) 2008
3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS) REGULATIONS (NI) 2008

SOLACE has considered the changes and asked that members be made aware of some of the implications that are less than helpful at the present time, and to encourage each Council, as an employer to respond to the consultation. Undernoted are key points to be considered in council's response.

- There are 3 sets of Regulations out for consultation requiring cross referencing for some elements of the proposals. It would be preferable to produce 1 set of Regulations for ease of management and understanding.
- 7 new contribution rates are being introduced and this will result in a significant administration burden for employers, scheme administrators as well as presenting some inequities. It would be preferable to determine 1 common contribution rate for all participants calculated on an average rate, which is understood to be circa 6.3%. Additionally some discretions are provided for employers to exercise and it is considered this may well result in wide variations within schemes given the number of employers. This is not viewed as desirable and may well lead to future difficulties for employers.
- New Ill-health arrangements are proposed introducing a 3 tier system. It is believed these proposals are unworkable as has been demonstrated in England.

It would appear to be perverse to introduce any such new arrangements given they will not work.

- Revisions to amend the application of Flexible Retirement arrangements so that part of a member's benefits can be paid require clarification before they can be implemented.
- Proposals to revise the age at which benefits can be accessed from 50 to 55 is unhelpful at this time given it will limit scope for managing the transition of a small number of employees through the RPA process. It would be preferable if this could be deferred to facilitate RPA transition work. It may be that the relevant Compensation Regulations could be modified to mitigate the negative impact of this age revision.

The consultation was referred to CMT and no comments are offered.

* **Councillor Stevenson rejoined the meeting at 9.37pm.**

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

to recommend that Council respond to the New Local Government Pension Scheme Consultation endorsing the five key points set out above and in particular its concern about the proposals to revise the age at which benefits can be accessed from 50 to 55 years.

369.12 SOMME ASSOCIATION - ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Application has been received from the Association for renewal of its annual subscription in the amount of £370-00 plus VAT. Budget provision has been made.

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

to recommend that Council renew the Somme Association Annual Subscription in the amount of £370.00 plus VAT.

369.13 THANKS

A letter of thanks has been received from Harry Gregg for the civic reception hosted by Council in his honour.

369.14 LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK EVENT 2008

Council's event to mark Local Democracy Week took place on Thursday 9th October. Three teams from Dalriada and Ballymoney High School took part in

the quiz. Unfortunately, due to another commitment Our Lady of Lourdes High School could not take part.

The event took the format of table quiz consisting of interactive and straightforward question rounds on Council, local politics, the EU, and current affairs.

The winners of the quiz were Dalriada Team 2 who will be presented with a cheque for £200 for their school in the Mayor's Parlour on a date yet to be confirmed.

It is hoped to repeat this event next year and all three local schools have already expressed an interest in sending multiple teams to compete. The members who attended the event also found the format successful as the contact and interaction with the young people by joining in their quiz teams was informal and more relaxed than the format of previous years' events.

Councillor Robinson thanked the officers and participating schools for what had proved to be a fun event and expressed support for keeping the format for future years.

369.15 BALLYMONEY BULLETIN

The Winter edition of the Ballymoney Bulletin will be delivered to households during the first week of November. As well as the Bulletin a Christmas brochure advertising town events, shopping, eating out and promotions will be included in the mailout.

The main items in the Winter edition are:

- Recycling – Have you got the bottle? Don't Bin it Bank it.
- Stamp out the Cold – fuel poverty
- Food Safety advice
- Corporate Plan – information for citizens
- Dog ownership and your responsibilities
- Information & Advice Evening for Dog Owners
- Peace III/Rural Development
- DPP members and role (sponsored page)
- Good Relations – Young Person of the Year Award, Building Positive Relations Awards Evening

Head of Corporate and Development Services advised on proposals to secure sponsored pages in all future editions in an effort to maintain costs within the limited budget available. Other distribution options were also being evaluated.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

