

Ballymoney Borough Council
Corporate & Central Services Meeting No 374 – 23rd March 2009

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

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No. 374 held in the Council Chamber, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 23rd March 2009 at 7pm.

IN THE CHAIR Alderman J Simpson

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell
C Cousley
H Connolly

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

APOLOGIES P McGuigan

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
[Items1-8]
Head of Corporate and Development Services
[Items 1-8]
Director of Central and Leisure Services
[Items 9-13]
Committee Clerk

374.1 MINUTES MEETING NO. 373 – 23rd FEBRUARY 2009

1.1 Staff Matters
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

1.2 Committee Report Addendum (CM 900.10)

For completeness of committee record, the Committee Report Addendum presented to Council on 2nd March 2009 is appended to the minutes (attached as Appendix A).

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

that the minutes of meeting No 373 – 23rd February 2009, as circulated, and addendum attached as Appendix A, be confirmed as a correct record.

CORPORATE SERVICES

374.2 VACANCY CONTROL GUIDANCE (LGSC)

This matter was deferred from the last meeting, min. 373.11 refers.

The Chief Executive presented comments prepared by the HR Officers Cluster Group, presented to the Transition Committee surrounding clarity/guidance on a number of issues, eg achieving uniformity across councils, consultation process for implementation of the policy, process for considering creation of new posts, identification of "at risk" posts, transferring functions, filling vacancies using restricted pools. It was considered that the implementation date of 1st may was too early for implementation as much of what is expected cannot be achieved in the absence of knowing that the new structures will look like. The report setting out the detailed comments is available from The Chief Executive's office.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council endorse the comments of the HR Officers Cluster Group seeking clarity/guidance on a range of issues identified above.

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

to recommend that Council endorse the comments of the HR Officers Cluster Group as presented to the Transition Committee in seeking clarity over a number of issues as outlined above on the Local Government Staff Commission Vacancy Control Guidance.

374.3 CONTRIBUTION – NORTH ANTRIM AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

The Association has made application for a contribution towards the annual show on 6th June. Each year the show attracts a large turnout of visitors from across the Province for its varied programme of events and exhibits.

The launch of the 2009 show will take place in Ballymoney Rugby Club on Monday 20th April at 7.30 pm and members are invited to register their interest in attending with the Office of the Chief Executive.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Council contribute £1,200 in respect of the running costs of the show and sponsorship, as provided for in the budget.

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

to recommend that Council contribute £1,200 in respect of the running costs and sponsorship of the North Antrim Agricultural Show to be held on 5th and 6th June 2009 at the Ballymoney Showgrounds, as provided for in the budget.

374.4 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

Committee decided to make representations to the Electoral Office regarding the electoral registration process, with particular regard to first time voters. The Chief Electoral Officer has responded advising that since the revised registration procedures were introduced in January 2008 the electorate has increased by more than 25,000 all of whom have complied with the procedures of about which Council complain. While it is accepted that the procedures are robust the Chief Electoral Officer is satisfied that they are both necessary and proportionate. They are designed to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that only those entitled to register are registered. That is necessary, not only to guard against electoral fraud but also to protect the public against the increasing risk of identity theft. It is well known that fraudsters and other criminals often seek to create a false identity. One way of doing so is to register in the false name. Once on the register it is relatively straightforward to open a bank account in the false name and then use it for criminal purposes. That said, if Council has any firm proposals on how the Electoral Office could improve the system they will be given careful consideration.

As regards doing more to encourage registration responsibility for this lies with the Electoral Commission not the Electoral Office. The Electoral Office has no budget for such activities although where possible they do attempt to encourage registration. Due to the lack of budget their efforts are necessarily modest and closely targeted. One recent example of work undertaken by Electoral Office staff was a "Schools Initiative" which between September and December 2008 increased the number of young people on the register by more than 11,000. A copy of the Council's correspondence has been passed to the Electoral Commission.

374.5 ARMED FORCES DAY

Government has announced that the British Armed Forces Day will take place on 27th June this year. The day will be an opportunity for the whole nation to show its appreciation for the contribution made by all those who serve or have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. The title "Armed Forces Day" has been chosen to reflect the wider Armed Forces family of serving personnel (both regular and reserve), veterans and the cadet forces. The strapline for the day is "Honouring Britain's Armed Forces, past, present and future". Building on the success of previous Veterans Day celebrations the organizing committee plan to mark the occasion with a wide range of community-led events taking place in towns and cities around the country. They want to enable communities across the UK to be involved in this inaugural year and are inviting all local authorities to join in by simultaneously "Flying the Flag" and to involve members of the local Reserve Forces and Cadet Association in the activity. They will provide council with a free, specially-commissioned Armed Forces Day Flag to be raised at 10.30 a.m. on Monday 22nd June. The intention is that this ceremony will be repeated across the country and the flags will be flown until after Armed Forces Day itself (Saturday 27th June.)

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

to recommend that Council fly the free, specially-commissioned Armed Forces Day Flag at 10.30 am on Monday 22nd June 2009 to commemorate British Armed Forces Day and participate as suggested by the organising committee.

Councillor Robinson expressed a desire to involve members of the local Reserve Forces and Cadet Association on events surrounding the commemoration and felt that an events budget could be identified to assist with the delivery of the week but that this was a matter for the full Council to debate.

Councillor Cavlan expressed her disagreement with the recommendation.

Chief Executive indicated that he would progress an application for the Armed Forces Day flag and report to committee in due course.

374.6 LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINING GROUP – BUDGET 2009-10

The Local Government Training Group has advised that its budget for the year 2009-10 has been determined at £275,000. The cost to Council's is apportioned on the basis of net ratable value, our contribution being £2,972.

374.7 NILGA BUSINESS PLAN

NILGA has provided an update on its Annual Plan, Subscriptions and Constitutional issues and have asked for the opportunity to send a delegation to Council to receive comments and concerns in relation to any aspect of the ongoing work and to make a short presentation in relation to NILGA activities and RPA generally. Written views are also invited. (Copy of report circulated).

IT IS RECOMMENDED that committee consider if the request should be taken up and the appropriate forum to deal with the matter.

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

to recommend that Council invite representatives from NILGA to make a presentation to committee with all members invited to attend.

374.8 CIVIC FUNCTIONS /EVENTS

Committee is invited to consider a civic function to mark the re-opening of the museum and any other proposed civic activities in the incoming year.

Committee **AGREED:**

that the opening of the museum following refit be marked by a civic function to coincide with the opening exhibition details to be settled by the Marketing Group.

Head of Corporate and Development Services updated members on the civic functions and events that Council are presently committed to in relation to international links, activity and advised on new facilities coming on stream during the incoming year and significant anniversaries of local groups.

- * **Councillor Stevenson arrived at the meeting at 7.45pm.**
- * **Director of Central and Leisure Services arrived at the meeting at 8.10pm.**
- * **Councillor Finlay arrived at the meeting at 8.10pm.**
- * **Chief Executive left the meeting at 8.10pm.**
- * **Head of Corporate and Development Services left the meeting at 8.10pm.**
- * **Alderman Cousley, MBE, left the meeting at 8.10pm.**
- * **Councillor Cavlan left the meeting at 8.10pm.**

CENTRAL SERVICES

374.9 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for period 12 (1), 2008/09 drawn on the Councils Capital & Revenue Bank Accounts were circulated.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that payment is made.

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

to recommend that accounts to the value of £720,863.18 from the Revenue Account and £152,941.84 from the Capital Account for Period 12(1), 2008/09 be approved for payment.

- * **Councillor Finlay left the meeting at 8.55pm during considerations of the above matters and returned to the meeting at 9.05pm.**

374.10 PAY AWARD 2008/09

The Director advised that the 2.45% pay award for 2008/09 offered by the National Employers was referred to arbitration by the Trade Union Side. The arbitration panel appointed to resolve the pay award dispute has ruled that an increase of 0.30% should be made in addition to the employer's final offer. The total pay award for 2008/09, effective from 1st April 2008 is 2.75% plus £100 per annum on spinal column points 4,5 & 6.

374.11 DEBT MANAGEMENT

The Director informed members that a trade debtor owing the Council £ 1,522.80 has written requesting that the Council agree the following payment terms for his debt - 40% to be paid now, with the balance being paid 1 year later.

Although this is outside the debt collection procedure in the Debt Management Policy in the current economic climate **it is recommended** that the Council agree to the above terms for the repayment of the outstanding debt.

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

to recommend that Council accept the trade debtor's terms of repayment of £1,522.80 with 40% being paid now and the balance being paid 1 year later.

374.12 REVALUATION OF ASSETS

The Director advised that under Capital Accounting requirements Councils' assets are to be revalued every five years. The assets were first valued with effect from 1st April 2003. The next valuation is due for the 2008/09 financial year. Revaluation work is currently being undertaken by Land & Property Services. Prior to setting the Rates for 2008/09 the Council agreed that as this exercise was a one-off the cost would be met from reserves. The estimated cost of the work is £9,768.

The Director advised that some assets were likely to increase in value due to refurbishment/extensions since last valuation.

374.13 NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE – DATA MATCHING

Under the new statutory provisions inserted in the Audit and Accountability (N.I) Order 2003 by the Serious Crime Act 2007, the Controller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C & AG) has been given the power to conduct data matching exercises for the purpose of assisting in the prevention and detection of fraud.

Data Matching involves comparing sets of data, such as payroll or benefits records of one organization against other records held by another organization. This allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found, it indicates that there may be an inconsistency that requires further investigation,

The data sets included in the National Fraud Initiative 2008/09 under the C & AG's powers are: payroll, pensions, trade creditors payments, housing benefit, blue badges, private supported care home residents and companies registry.

The National Fraud Initiative was established by the Audit Commission in 1996 in England. In the first 10 years of operation around £450 million has been identified as fraud or overpayments.

The Director advised that there were a number of matches that are currently being investigated.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Appendix A: Committee Report Addendum

APPENDIX A

Committee Report Addendum

Appendix A

For the completeness of committee record the Committee Report Addendum presented to Council on 2nd March 2009 will be appended to the minutes.

COMMITTEE REPORT ADDENDUM**900.10.1 Review Of Local Government Boundaries**

The Boundaries Commissioner will publish his revised recommendations on 27th February and Public Notice will be given in the three main daily newspapers – Irish News, News Letter and Belfast Telegraph – and in provincial newspapers.

Copies of the revised recommendations, including maps, will be available for public inspection at the Council Offices, the Electoral Office, Area Electoral Offices, all public libraries, the Office of the Electoral Commission and the Boundary Commissioner's Office. The report will also be published on the Boundary Commission website – www.lgbc-ni.org

The revised recommendations take account of written representations received in relation to the provisional recommendations and of the recommendations of the eleven Assistant commissioners who held public hearings last November. The reports of the Assistant Commissioners will be published on the Boundary Commission website.

The publication of the report begins a consultation period inviting written representations on the revised recommendations by **Thursday 9th April**.

On the closure of the consultation period the Boundary Commissioner will consider the representations received and any further revisions, if required, and these will be reflected in the final report to be submitted to the Department of Environment by 30th June 2009.

900.10.2 Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services

The Chief Executive advised members of correspondence received from the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services. A Northern Ireland regional pay briefing relating to pay rounds and settlements will be held on Thursday 26th March in Castlereagh Borough Council at 10.00 am. An invitation has been extended to the Chief Executive or nominee and the Mayor, or elected representative for employment policy matters.

The Mayor, Councillor Finlay, nominated the Deputy Mayor to attend. This was agreed, with the Chief Executive or his nominee, also attending.