

Ballymoney Borough Council
Corporate & Central Services Meeting No 376 – 27th May 2009

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

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No. 376 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, Ballymoney on Wednesday 27th May 2009 at 10.30am.

IN THE CHAIR Alderman J Simpson

PRESENT **Aldermen**
F Campbell
H Connolly

Councillors
B Kennedy
M McCamphill
E Robinson
I Stevenson

APOLOGIES **Councillors:**
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
A Cavlan

IN ATTENDANCE Chief Executive
Head of Corporate and Development Services
Heather Moorhead, Chief Executive, NILGA } Item 1
John Matthews, NILGA }
Committee Clerk

376.1 PRESENTATION – NILGA

The Chair of committee welcomed representatives from NILGA, Heather Moorhead and John Matthews, to make their presentation in relation to NILGA activities and RPA (attached as Appendix 1). A copy of NILGA communication on their annual plan, subscriptions and constitutional update was circulated.

- * **Councillor Kennedy arrived during the above presentation at 10.35am**
- * **Councillor Stevenson arrived during the above presentation at 10.45am.**
- * **Councillor Kennedy left the meeting at 10.50am**

During the ensuing discussion the NILGA representatives responded to a range of questions. Concerns were expressed by members at the RPA implementation timetable and level of progress to date. Arising from discussion on the role of NILGA representing the local government sector, some members questioned the effectiveness of its influencing role, the benefits at local level for the council's contribution, and communication with the sector. Councillor Robinson,

commenting on attendance levels and engagement at NILGA meetings, suggested that Council seriously consider , when selecting delegates to NILGA, the level of attendance.

- * **Councillor Kennedy returned to the meeting at 10.58am during discussion of the above item.**
- * **Representatives from NILGA left the meeting at 11.35am**
- * **Councillor Robinson left the meeting at 11.35am.**

376.2 MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 376 – 27TH APRIL 2009

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

that the minutes of CRCS Meeting No. 376 – 27th April 2009, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

CORPORATE SERVICES

- * **Councillor Robinson returned to the meeting at 11.40am.**

376.3 RPA: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM – TRANSITION COMMITTEES & TRANSITION MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Two DOE Advisory Notes are tabled herewith:

[1] Advisory Note on Key Tasks & Milestones (DOE Circular No. LG07/09)

[2] Advisory Note on Winding Up Arrangements (DEO Circular LG 08/09)

The Chief Executive highlighted the work and timelines in advisory note 1, commenting on communication strategy, short-term implementation plan, development of vision and appointment of key staff and the winding up arrangements set out in advisory note 2. Concern was expressed by members at the major work involved in both implementation and winding up arrangements and the lack of resources for both. The Chief Executive will keep committee updated on these issues.

376.4 TRANSITION COMMITTEES – LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ESTABLISHMENT OF TRANSITION COMMITTEES IN STATUTE – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

This matter was considered at committee's last meeting (min. ref. 376.8) when it was deferred to the May meeting of committee. **Council has granted delegated authority to committee to agree Council response.**

The report on the matter and Chief Executive's comments and suggested response are included in the minutes of the last meeting (Ref: 375.8)

Following discussion committee **AGREED:**

that response, agreed by committee, on Council's behalf, to the questions posed in the consultation document, as set out in Appendix B, be submitted to the Department of Environment.

Councillor Stevenson requested that his opposition with regard to the availability of a casting vote (Q7) be recorded.

Councillor Robinson requested that her abstention to the committee's decision regarding on the role of the LGSC (Q12) be recorded.

- * **Councillor Kennedy left the meeting at 12.15pm during discussion of the above item. (Q10/11)**
- * **Alderman Campbell and Alderman Connolly indicated that they would have to leave the meeting as they had other commitments - time 12.50pm during discussion of the above item. (Q12). The Chairman explained that the meeting time had been changed at the request of the Director of Central & Leisure Services to facilitate her attendance at a meeting of Rasharkin Community Centre at 7 pm. It was agreed that the meeting adjourn at 1.00 p.m. and reconvene at 2.00 p.m.**

376.5 SEVERANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR COUNCILLORS – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

This matter was considered at committee's last meeting (min. ref. 376.10) when it was deferred to the May meeting of committee, taking account of any views submitted by the National Association of Councillors, who had requested the deferral to enable the Association to formulate and circulate its response (min. ref. 376.9 refers). **Council has granted delegated authority to committee to agree Council response.**

The report on the matter with details on the questions posed are included in the minutes of the committee's last meeting (min ref. 375.10)

National Association of Councillors Response: Report on Severance Arrangements for Councillors, prepared by Key Consulting on behalf of the committee and members of the National Association of Councillors, (NAC) addressing and answering the questions raised in the DOE Consultation Document, agreed by the committee and nominated members of the NAC on 13th May 2009, is attached as Appendix C.

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

that committee, on Council's behalf, endorse the National Association of Councillors' Response to the consultation

document on Severance Arrangements for Councillors as prepared by Key Consulting and attached as Appendix C.

376.6 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Information Commissioner's Office working in conjunction with NILGA held a half day workshop in April on the subject of publication schemes, aimed at giving councillors and senior officials an opportunity to discuss how they are developing their publication schemes and explore ICO expectations. A report of the workshop is available.

The follow up actions from the workshop, with comment on Council's position is set out below.

- Councils should ensure they have adopted the ICO's new model publication scheme (*Adopted by Council in January 2009, on recommendation of committee – meeting No 371 22/12/09*)
- Councils should reflect on the current practice as regards various categories of information and consider steps to proactively release (*this is under consideration*)
- ICO will liaise with DOE with regard to further advice on procurement officers and council staff who handle FOI matters

376.7 LIMIT ON SPECIAL PURPOSES EXPENDITURE

The Department of Environment Circular LG 09/09 dated 18th May 2009 sets out details of Council's limit for on expenditure for special purposes 2009/10 - £13,345.

376.8 SOMME REMEMBRANCE PARADE AND SERVICE – KNOCKAGH WAR MEMORIAL

An invitation has been received from Carrickfergus Borough Council to the Mayor, Aldermen, Councillors & Chief Executive, to attend the Parade and Service to be held at the Knockagh War Memorial, Carrickfergus on Sunday 28th June, 10.40 a.m. followed by a service at 11 a.m. The Mayor is invited to lay a wreath. Wearing of robes is optional.

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

to recommend that any Councillor who so wishes to attend the Somme Remembrance Parade and Service at Knockagh War memorial may do so, with the option of the wearing of robes.

376.9 SOMME ASSOCIATION – UNVEILING OF MEMORIAL PLAQUES

The Somme Association is holding a Service of Remembrance to the Men of the 16th (Irish) Division on 3rd September 2009 in the village of Guillemont. There will also be an unveiling of two memorial plaques to honour two Irish Victoria Cross winners. Council's attention is drawn to a coach organized to the event, leaving 2nd September and returning 5th September. Places cost approx. £420.

Chief Executive advised members that further information is being sought at present in order to source alternative trips to the Service of Remembrance and that the item should be deferred.

It was agreed that rather than adjourn the meeting as planned, at 1 pm, the remaining Central Services business be approved as follows, as it transpired that the Director of Central & Leisure Services had a further meeting commitment at 3 p.m. and was not available at the present time. An additional item she had regarding the penny product to be dealt with as an addendum to the committee minutes at the Council meeting.

CENTRAL SERVICES

376.10 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advise schedules detailing payments for Period 2, 2009/10 drawn on the Council's Revenue and Capital Bank Accounts will be circulated at the meeting.

It is recommended that the payments are made.

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

to recommend that accounts to the value of £966,961.70 from the Revenue Account and £ 75640.90 from the Capital Account for Period 2, 2009/10 be approved for payment.

376.11 BUSINESS PLANS 2009/10

Business Plans for Finance, Information and Communication Technology and Human Resources have been produced for the year 2009/10. (Copies attached)

The plans detail the work to be undertaken, during the year within the budget limits approved by the Council.

It is recommended that the Council approve the plans.

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

to recommend that council adopt the Leisure Services Business Plans for Finance, Information and Communication Technology and Human Resources for the year 2009/10, attached as Appendix D.

376.12 INSURANCE RENEWALS 2009/10

The Council's insurance portfolio is renewed annually on 1st April following a tendering process by the Insurance Broker.

Details of the renewal premiums together with comparative figures for 2008/09 were circulated.

As the Council's claims experience for the last 5 years is good and the insurance market is good I am pleased to report that there is a slight reduction in the total premiums paid for 2009/10.

376.13 CASH HANDLING SECURITY

As a result of Internal Audit recommendations and security review during insurance renewals Council has been requested to implement some additional arrangements for cash security. Key safes have been recommended for storage of keys belonging to the large cash safes. In addition to this a new safe for the storage of cash in the Town Hall has been recommended.

In consequence of this the following purchases are recommended:

Phoenix 0932 safe with keypad access	£180
2 no. Phoenix KS0031 Key safe with keypad access	£106
Total	£286

It is recommended that Council purchase the safes detailed above so that Council can comply with insurance and audit requirements. As there is no budget for this equipment there will be an overspend in the relevant services.

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

to recommend that Council purchase a Phoenix 0932 safe with keypad access at a cost of £180 and 2 no. Phoenix KS0031 Key safes with keypad access at a cost of £106. (Total £286)

This being all the business the meeting closed at 1.10pm.

Appendix A - NILGA Presentation Slides

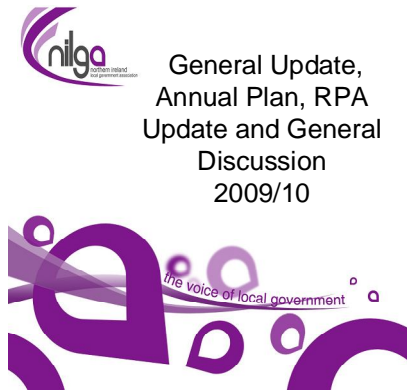
Appendix B - Ballymoney Borough Council response to consultation document - Transition Committees – Local Government Reform Establishment of transition committees in statute.

Appendix C: Report on Severance Arrangements for Councillors, prepared by Key Consulting on behalf of the committee and members of the National Association of Councillors, (NAC)

Appendix D: Leisure Services Business Plans for Finance, Information and Communication Technology and Human Resources

APPENDIX A

NILGA Presentation Slides



- Update 2007/2008
 - Key Successes/ Challenges
- Annual Plan – key developments
- Summary of Progress on RPA
- **Discussion**



Business Plan

NILGA's Objectives

"To be the voice of strong, democratic local government and the champion of improved services to citizens"

"To work with councils and other stakeholders to champion and support the development of a world class local government system in Northern Ireland which works in partnership with others to serve citizens."

6 Core, 11 DoE Funded, 2 NIJC, 4 Project Officers



- **3. Developing Local Government Policy - EG**
 - Cllr Bell – EU Issues
 - Cllr Gallagher – Waste Strategy
 - Cllr Beattie – Planning Policy and Reform
 - Cllr Kerr – IS Strategy and E govt Projects
 - Cllr Wilson – Agriculture and Rural Issues
- **....and Influencing Government**
 - £8m rates support
 - Evidence Sessions/Seminars – Community Safety, Suicide, Obesity, Territorial Cohesion, Planning Policy

All work drawn from Councils – NILGA is the funnel



- 1. Building Strong Relationships**
 - Government, Assembly
 - NAC and SOLACE, quarterly meetings
- 2. Effective and Innovative Communication**
 - Enhanced Profile (Rates and General Issues)
 - Key point of contact – often we pass to councils
 - Website and Newsletters
 - Excellent Conference



Themes

- 4. Supporting Local Government modernisation**
 - SLB, 3 PDPs - Key Mile stones met (More RPA section)
- 5. Effective and efficient services to Local government** - £800k Additionality -
 - 190%
 - £39k - FLGA
 - £60k - EU
 - £661k - DOE (RPA) - £30k - DOE (Waste)
 - £10k - Ulster in Bloom
- 6. Effective Internal Systems and Process**
 - IIP retention / Systems Developing



Key Challenges

- Establishing an effective team in a challenging timetable
 - Staff retention- temporary contracts/excellent experience
- Communication, Effective Engagement and meeting complex stakeholder needs
- Managing Uncertainty / New environment



Proposals for 2009/2010

- Existing Business**
- A greater customer focus - Improvement plan
- A greater strategic approach
 - Strategic Policy Committee
 - People and Employment Panel
- Key areas of development**
 - Economic Development Committee
 - EU Work / People and Employment
 - Meeting Structures



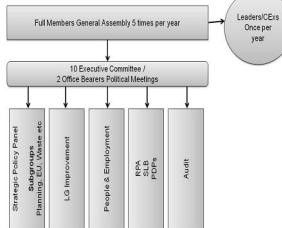
Meeting Arrangements

Proposals for change to meeting regime

- Reduce Full Members meetings from 6 > 5
- Institute an annual meeting with NILGA Office Bearers and Chairs / Mayors and Chief Executives of Councils
- Reduce executive meetings from 11 to 10 (Provide time for strategic political meetings for Office Bearers)



Potential Structures





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Key Issues

- Waive the annual increase of 2.5% in light of the financial pressure facing councils
 - Projected deficit of £42k (Explore cost saving and income generating projects)
- Suspension on Clauses 13 and 14 in NILGA Constitution (withdrawal and liability)
- Begin consideration of new LGA? (context of PWC work)



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RPA Update

- SLB
- Established and operational
- Genuine Political Engagement/Leadership
- Priorities
 - Transferring Functions Package
 - Resources
 - Programme Management
- 12 Month Review May 2009



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PDP A Update

Issue	Progress	Planned Activity
Governance	Proposals Agreed Transition Committee Consultation	Consultation Guidance
Community Planning	Legislative Proposals	Trials Guidance
Central/Local Relationship	Proposals Agreed Concordat to be developed	Consultation Guidance



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PDP B Update

Issue	Progress	Planned Activity
Service Delivery & Performance Improvement	Legislative Proposals Agreed	Framework Development Consultation Guidance
IS Strategy	Draft Deloitte Strategy Pilot Projects	Consultation Implementation Plan
Procurement Strategy	Preliminary Work	Consultation Guidance
Customer Services Strategy	Preliminary Work	Develop Strategy
Shared Services	Awaiting PWC	Develop Strategy



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PDP C Update

Issue	Progress	Planned Activity
Transferring Functions	PWC Appointed Transferring Functions Group	Consultation Guidance
HR	Finalising policy for implementation	HR Coordinating Group Consultation & negotiation
Capacity Building	Overarching structure	Design and resources
Finance and Estates	Implementation Issues identified	Finalising policy for implementation



RPA Timeline 2009

2009	
May	Phase 1 Local Govt Service Delivery Options final report
June	-Consultation on Local Govt (Reorganisation) Bill -Local Govt (Contracts) Bill introduced to Assembly -Phase 2 Service Delivery Consultancy final report -Local Govt Boundary Commissioner final report
July	Consultation on Local Government (Finance) Bill
September	Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2009
November	Local Government (Contracts) Bill comes into force Statutory Committees in place



RPA Timeline 2010 / 2011

2010	
February	Local Government (Finance) Bill introduced to Assembly
May	Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill introduced to Assembly
June	District electoral Area Commissioners Report
October	Local Government (Finance) Bill comes into force
2011	
May	-Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill comes into force -Local and Assembly Elections -New Councils formally take office



Transition Committee

Early 2010	Statutory Transition Committees
2010/2011	Community Planning Pilots
Spring 2010	Chief Exec Designate appointed
Feb 2011	Striking the rate



Closing

- We hope this gives a flavour of the work
- We welcome the opportunity to discuss and issues, concerns and comments
- THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX B

**Ballymoney Borough Council response to consultation document -
Transition Committees – Local Government Reform
Establishment of transition committees in statute.**

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
TRANSITION COMMITTEES –LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM
ESTABLISHMENT OF TRANSITION COMMITTEES IN STATUTE -**

Council welcomes the proposal to provide a statutory basis for Transitions Committees (TCs) and urges the Department to progress the legislation as quickly as possible, in view of the major work involved in transition.

Council's response to the questions asked within the document are as set out below:

- Q1 *Do you agree with the proposed size of the TCs?*
Q2 *Do you agree that representation from district councils in a group should be equal?*

The present arrangement for the Causeway cluster (20 members, with equal representation of 5 from each of the 4 councils) has worked well and should be retained.

- Q3 *Should district councils have flexibility in their approach to nominating members to a TC?*

Agreed.

- Q4 *Do you support the approach to achieving consistency in the application of the divisor method?*

Council believe it is important that the Department provides detailed guidance on the application of all the options. The guidance should include directions as to: -

- a) the date at which the composition of the council is to be used in the formulae (e.g. is it the 2005 election date or is it to be a current date)?
- b) if the date is not the 2005 election date, how are councillors who have changed party since the election to be treated in the calculations and how are the results of by-elections since that date to be treated?
- c) Assuming that First Preference Votes are to be used in place of seats on council as a tie-breaker, how are they to be calculated for each party?
- d) Rules on grouping of independents and smaller parties.

- Q5 *Do you agree that a TC should be able to establish sub-committees?*
Q6 *Do you support the process for the allocation of the Chair and Vice-Chair positions, and for determining the membership of sub-committees?*
Q7 *Do you agree that the Chair of a TC or a sub-committee (if established) should not have a "casting" vote?*

Council agrees that TCs should have the power to establish sub-committees; it would be a matter for each TC as to whether or not it exercised that power. It is suggested that there is no reason to restrict the power of delegation which a TC has; it is effectively acting as a council and should have the same power of

delegation as that given to a council in section 18 of the 1972 Act. As with the power of creating sub-committees this does not mean that the TC would have to use the power.

Regarding the posts of Chair and Vice-Chair The TC should have the ability to rotate the Chair and Vice-Chair if it so desires.

In regard to the availability of a casting vote, some method of ensuring that decisions are reached when there is an equality of votes is even more important than normal where there is a deadline to be met (May 2011). If there is not to be a casting vote, how is it proposed to avoid stalemate or delay while the matter is referred back to a later meeting? It was agreed that the casting vote should be retained.

Q8 Do you agree that the "call-in" and Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) procedures should be available for the operation of the TCs?

Agreed.

Q9 If so, do you agree that the levels set for the trigger for "call-in" and the threshold for QMVs are appropriate?

Agreed.

Q10 Do you agree that a code of conduct should apply to members of a TC?

Q11 Do you agree that meetings of TCs should where practicable be open to the public?

Since the TC is functioning as a shadow council it is logical that its members should be required to meet that same standards as they do when acting as members of their councils. Council officers supporting TCs are already covered by the code of conduct for council staff and that same requirement should be extended to officers who are appointed by the TCs. By the same token, as the statutory TC is effectively a council, it should hold its meetings in public where possible. Regarding attendance of councillors who are not members of the TC it is important that there is clarity as to their rights in attending e.g. is it proposed that they have speaking rights but not voting rights or are they simply there as observers?

Q12 Do you agree that the role of the LGSC should be extended to provide support to the TCs?

It is Council's view that this is an important issue and that the proposal is to be strongly welcomed. The treatment of staff during transition is an issue which has great potential for conflict and grievance if not handled properly and the LGSC has a proven record of providing support and advice in this area. It is also the case that the TC will need expert and independent guidance on the appointment of senior staff to the new council, since many if not all of the candidates will be employees of the existing councils.

Q13 Do you agree that TCs should have the power of approval over the budgets of constituent councils in the year preceding the coming into operation of the new council?

Council anticipates a number of practical difficulties with this proposal: -

- a) Statutory TCs are unlikely to be established before January 2010 so there will be little if any time for them to examine and approve the rates proposed to be set by the four councils in this cluster;
- b) Even if the TCs were established in time they will not have appointed a Chief Executive or Finance Director, so who will advise them?
- c) Councils are accountable for the rates they set and for managing the budgets on which they are based. If the TC is to have power to amend the rate, does that mean that it will become accountable in place of the council?
- d) Does the Department plan to arbitrate if there is no agreement between the TC and a constituent council?

It is suggested that while there may be merit in the idea behind this proposal, there are too many practical difficulties with the solution proposed.

Q14 Do you agree that the Department should have the Power of Direction in relation to TCs?

While it is to be hoped that this power would not need to be used it seems unavoidable that the Department must be able to intervene as a last resort to ensure that new councils can function from May 2011. However, it must be said that there are many reasons why TCs could struggle to meet the deadline and these are likely to be due either to delays in legislation or failure to secure the resources of money and staff to complete the task in the time available. Council would therefore urge the Department to ensure that legislation is enacted without delay and that the resources identified by its own consultants as necessary for transition and transformation are provided".

APPENDIX C

**Report on Severance Arrangements for Councillors, prepared by Key
Consulting on behalf of the committee and members of the
National Association of Councillors, (NAC)**

Consultation Paper – Severance Arrangements for Councillors (Key Consulting)

This paper is in response to the Consultation Document on Severance Arrangements for Councillors issued by the Department for Environment, Local Government Policy Division, April 2009.

A meeting of the NACNI was held on Wednesday 13th May 2009, and the questions raised in the Consultation Document, were discussed, and ratified by those present.

The Consultation Document and the recommendations of the Councillors Remuneration Working Group report (CRWG) (2006) are in general terms acceptable to the committee and members of the NACNI.

We accept that to receive any severance award, the Councillor must be in post at the time of application, as the award is for those councillors currently serving and has no retrospective elements.

In terms of service we believe that the severance award should “reflect past service” particularly during the difficult times experienced by the Province when local councillors were often the first and only point of contact available to citizens to whom they could voice their concerns. These duties were carried out often under the threat of attack to themselves, families or properties.

Q1. Do you have any comments about the proposal to introduce a severance scheme for local district councillors?

1.1 As a result of the review of Public administration, and against the background of the planned reduction in the number of councils and councillors, the then Minister of the Environment (2005) announced the introduction of a severance scheme to recognise the contribution of long standing councillors who opt not to stand for re-election at the next local government elections (May 2009 now 2011). This scheme has continued to receive the full backing of all subsequent Ministers and the Assembly.

1.2 The development of the details of any such scheme would be informed by the report of the Councillors Remuneration Working Group (2006).

1.3 The elected committee of the NACNI, with its collective membership have lobbied for a severance scheme for all members, welcome the proposal and will strive to ensure that its members who wish to apply for the scheme are adequately rewarded for their service to “governance” in Northern Ireland.

1.4 Severance schemes have been awarded in Scotland, Wales and the ROI and we therefore support the proposal to implement a severance scheme in Northern Ireland for local District Councillors.

Q2. Do you agree that MLA's, MP's, Members of the House of Lords and MEP's should not be eligible for severance award?

2.1 It is accepted that those councillors elected to higher office in any of these institutions are remunerated for this and that they are also eligible for pensions and / or resettlement grants when they are either not re-elected or choose to retire from public life.

2.2 We accept that the recommendations of the CRWG not to award severance to any local councillor who continues in public office are in line with the schemes implemented in Scotland and Wales.

2.3 However there is a strong case that local councillors, who decide not to stand for re-election in 2011, but opt to remain in public office at a higher level, should be eligible for a severance award to "reflect their past service" in council?

2.4 We say this as many of our Councillors who may be eligible under this criterion have given and continue to give good and trusted service to the communities that they were elected to represent.

2.5 We therefore believe it should be possible for these sitting Councillors to receive the severance award for the period of time spent in local government prior to election as MP / MLA etc.,

2.6 Qualifying Period to Count. (see 3.4)

Q3. Should the eligibility criteria include a minimum period of service? If yes what should that period be?

3.1 The NACNI is of the opinion that that the eligibility criteria should include a minimum period of service.

3.2 The CRWG report recommended that councillors who had served more than one term should be eligible.

3.3 Precedents for a minimum period of service were set in Scotland – at least four years service, Wales – at least fifteen years service and the ROI – five years service. All three schemes used cumulative service to determine eligibility and the level of award.

3.4 We therefore recommend that councillors should have served more than one term to be eligible for receipt of any severance award.

Q4. Do you agree that a provision allowing a councillors next of kin to receive the award should be included in the severance scheme?

4.1 We recommend that provision be made, to enable the recipient of the severance award to “nominate a person or persons” to receive the award in the event of the councillor dying after applying for a severance award but before the award is made.

4.2 This would ensure that the award is still received by those persons who supported the councillor during his/her time in office and reflects the sacrifices they also had to make to ensure that the recipient was able to carry out the duties to the full, sometimes at the expense of home / family life commitments.

4.3 The only change to the amount of the award being made to a nominated person would be the provision that they would be liable for any taxes etc that the award may attract. (see 8.3)

Q5. Timing Options for the scheme.

5.1 The recommendation for commencement of the scheme would be Option 1, January 2010, providing that the legislation to allow for co-option to council is in place.

Q6. Is there another more suitable time to make the scheme available?

6.1 Of the three options suggested in the Consultation Document Option 1 is the most suitable time for implementation of the scheme.

Q7. Which of the methods for calculating the scheme do you consider most suitable?

7.1 We recommend option one in line with the recommendation of the CRWG. This method has been used before in the scheme held in Wales in 2003, which was calculated on the basis of £1,000 for each complete year of service but was to a maximum of 20 years.

7.2 Option 2 (a capped banding system, 15 – 20 years maximum) as used in Scotland would financial disadvantage those Councillors with longer service.

7.3 A set amount for each year of service, up to 38 years. (the original total of years was 36 but with the extension to councils of two years this now allows for 38 years).

7.4 The amount per year should be £1000.

7.5 It is also recommended that any continuous period of six months or more within a complete year should count as one year, as with the scheme implemented in Scotland in 2007.

**Q8. Should there be a maximum amount for an individual award?
If yes, what sum should that be?**

8.1 We believe that it is reasonable to set a maximum of £38,000 for an individual award, as this would ensure that those Councillors with the longest service are not financially disadvantaged, in terms of the amount they would be entitled to for each year of service given.

8.2 We say this as to implement a banding system as used in Scotland in 2007, would financially disadvantage the longest serving eligible councillors. It would effectively mean that a councillor with thirty eight years service would receive the same amount of severance as a councillor with between fifteen and twenty years service.

8.3 Any amount agreed in a severance award should be inclusive of income tax, national insurance etc.

Q9. Who do you think should meet the cost of the severance scheme?

9.1 There are only two options available to meet the costs of any such scheme, either Local Councils or by Central Government.

9.2 In Scotland and Wales the costs of the schemes were financed by the devolved administrations.

9.3 It is our recommendation that the costs of any severance scheme should be met by Central Government, given that the Review of Public Administration and the re-organisation of local government is an initiative that is being undertaken by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

9.4 In the current economic climate, to ask councils to meet the financial implications associated with any proposed severance scheme would cause further serious implications for councils and ratepayers alike.

Q10. Should a recipient of an award be required to repay it in full in the event that he/she is elected or co-opted to a council at a future date?

10.1 If the recipient of an award returns to serve in local government before a period of 8 years (two terms) has elapsed, he/she should repay the award in full.

Addendum

11.1 A member requested that an issue relating to the Consultation Document is raised with the Department of Environment, Local Government Policy Division. The member was unhappy that the figures referred to in Annex B (page 22) and Annex C (page 23) of the Document, estimations of costs and eligibility of Councillors for awards appeared to be misleading and incorrect.

11.2 It is almost impossible to predict the precise number of eligible councillors who will actually take up any opportunity for severance payments, there is a view held by many that would suggest that the numbers of Councillors actually availing of the scheme will fall short of the projected numbers.

APPENDIX D

**Leisure Services Business Plans for Finance, Information and
Communication Technology and Human Resources**

Finance Business Plan 2009/2010

<u>Vision</u>	To provide accurate, relevant, timely financial information and ensuring the timely and accurate payment of staff, councillors and creditors
Business Development	<p>Continual updating of relevant standards, guidelines, legislation, best practice</p> <p>Reports provided by deadlines</p> <p>All returns completed on time</p> <p>Implement and update internal financial controls</p> <p>Accurate payment of wages and salaries</p> <p>Ensure accurate payment of creditors within 30 days</p> <p>Recover all outstanding debt</p> <p>Maximise return from investments</p> <p>Replacement of clock cards with electronic system (in conjunction with IT) – JDLC and Knock Road</p> <p>Completion of Single Status back pay – Sep 2009</p>

Staff & Budget	4 full-time and 1 part-time 2009/2010 Budget £242,506 Attend courses/seminars as and when required to keep up to date with latest standards/practice Train staff in latest standards/legislation
External Liaison	Maintain membership of Local Government Finance Officers Group Maintain membership of Local Government Benchmarking Group Regular communication with external Auditor CIPFA guidance
Resource Management	Work within budgetary limits Accurate completion of statutory returns
External Standards	Compliance with GAAP Meet external deadlines Implementation of new accounting guidelines
Results	Continual updating of relevant standards, guidelines, legislation, best practice – ongoing Reports provided by deadlines - ongoing All returns completed on time - ongoing Implement and update internal financial controls - ongoing Accurate payment of wages and salaries - ongoing Ensure accurate payment of creditors within 30 days - ongoing Recover all outstanding debt - ongoing Maximise return from investments – ongoing Replacement of clock cards with electronic system (in conjunction with IT) – Riada House and Town Hall complete Recruitment of staff member – November 2008

ICT Business Plan 2009/2010

<u>Vision</u>	To provide and maintain ICT systems using the latest technology
Business Development	Ensure all available upgrades applied within 30 days of availability Respond to IT fault reports within 2 hrs Maintain 99% availability of central IT systems Disposal of obsolete equipment under WEEE regulations Timeware roll out to additional sites MS Office upgrade to latest version Implementation of Net Consent software Co-operation with Cluster grouping Development of Business Continuity Plan

Staff & Budget	1 part-time 1 full-time 2009/2010 Budget £69857 Attend courses/seminars as and when required to keep up to date with latest technology Train full-time employee in Server 2003 management Checkpoint training
External Liaison	Maintain membership of Local Government IT Officers Group
Resource Management	Maintain and develop ICT systems within budgetary limits.
External Standards	Systems developed in conjunction with current best practice and utilising latest technology
Results	Ensure all available upgrades applied within 30 days of availability - ongoing Respond to IT fault reports within 2 hrs - ongoing Maintain 99% availability of central IT systems - ongoing Replacement of 20 older pc's – November 2008 Disposal of obsolete equipment under WEEE regulations - ongoing Upgrade of Timeware to new version and roll out to additional sites – Riada House and Town Hall complete June 2008 Expansion of MRM software to additional sites – Mar / Apr 2009 Implementation of Net Consent software – June 2009 Server Room relocation and refurbishment – Jan 2009 Assist with Tascomi installation – Sep/Oct/Nov 2008

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**HUMAN RESOURCES – BUSINESS PLAN 2009-2010**

Purpose of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide effective professional leadership on human resource and equality matters and to ensure the provision to the authority of strategic, corporate and operational advice on human resource issues; • To lead on the development of policy, setting of standards and the promotion of best practice in all areas of human resource management; • To support the mainstreaming of equality and diversity throughout the Council's services; • To ensure that the Council's HR practices fully support and complement its aims and objectives, meet legal requirements and meet best practice; • To maintain and develop employee and industrial relations. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The department aims to provide an excellent service to all with whom it has contact.</i></p>
Service Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete the Single Status project reaching an agreement which is both fair and affordable. • To complete our Equality Impact Assessment Timetable and put mechanisms in place to ensure the screening of all new/revised policies • To continue training and development initiatives which will effectively prepare staff for the challenges of RPA • To develop effective leadership at all levels that will help to motivate staff, assist them to realise their potential and raise standards and performance throughout the organisation • To ensure that Equality and Diversity are effectively mainstreamed across the Council and informs the decision-making process • To review and update the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedures to ensure effective measures are in place to address problems in a timely manner • To implement the Disability & Gender Action Plans and develop a comprehensive work-life balance policy to meet changing needs • To develop a Well-being Policy which incorporates initiatives which create a healthy working environment and maximise attendance and effectiveness at work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue working with HR Cluster Group to develop policies and measures which will ease the transition to the new super council. • Continue to maximise the use of IT to improve service delivery • Continue to monitor the operation of the Contract on the provision of agency staff.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 full-time and 1 part-time • continue to develop staff in terms of relevant HR competencies, good practice/standards and changes in/introduction of new legislation. • Implement PiP programme to next level
Key Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members and officers • Local Government Staff Commission • Employers Organisation • Northern Ireland Joint Council • Recognised Trade Unions (GMB, T&G, Unite, NIPSA) • People & Performance Management Association • Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development • Training Providers • Occupational Health (Occupational Health Unit, Cullybackey Health Centre)
Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work within budget limits – Budget £109,135 • Accurate completion of statutory returns
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Appeals for Job Evaluation completed by December 2009 • Completion of EQUIA timetable – ongoing • Deliver initiatives under the Disability and Gender Action Plans – on-going • Continued updating/reviewing of policy and policy development in line with changes in/new legislation -ongoing • Reports/statutory returns completed within deadlines – on-going • Corporate Training Programme based on Needs Analysis implemented – on-going • Skills audit of all employee commenced by June/July 2009 • Childcare Voucher Scheme assessed and decision reached by June 2009 • Review of Sickness Absence Policy completed by June 2009 • Implementation of new Discipline/Grievance Procedure by June 2009

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revised Child Protection Policy & Procedures implemented by September 2009 – work on-going with NSPCC and HR Cluster Group to include training at various levels.• Health and well being programme established by September 2009• Wellbeing Initiative for staff to be held by April 2009 including completion of Stress Management Policy and Work-life Balance Policy developed through the HR Cluster Group.
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