

Ballymoney Borough Council
Corporate & Central Services Meeting No 387 – 28th June 2010

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

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No. 387 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, Ballymoney on Monday 28th June 2010 at 7.00pm.

IN THE CHAIR

Chief Executive (Item 1)
Alderman J Simpson (Items 2-16)

PRESENT

Aldermen
F Campbell
H Connolly

Councillors
A Cavlan
R Halliday
B Kennedy, Mayor
M McCamphill
T McKeown
I Stevenson
E Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
Director of Central and Leisure Services (Items 1-9)
Head of Corporate and Development Services (Items 6-16)
Committee Clerk

APOLOGIES

Alderman Cousley, Deputy Mayor, MBE
Councillor J Finlay
Councillor P McGuigan
Councillor D McKay
Councillor Patterson

387.1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Chief Executive invited nominations for chair of Corporate and Central Services Committee 2010/11.

It was proposed by Councillor Cavlan, seconded by Alderman Connolly

that Councillor McCamphill be elected chair of Corporate and Central Services Committee 2010/11.

It was proposed by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Councillor McKeown

that Alderman Simpson be elected chair of Corporate and Central Services committee 2010/11.

Chief Executive invited members to vote for the 2 nominations in alphabetical order. 3 members voted for Councillor McCamphill while 7 members voted for Alderman Simpson.

Chair declared Alderman Simpson elected Chair of Corporate and Central Services Committee 2010/11.

Alderman Simpson assumed the chair.

387.2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Chair invited nominations for vice-chair of Corporate and Central Services Committee 2010/11.

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

that Councillor McCamphill be elected vice-chair of Corporate and Central Services Committee 2010/11.

387.3 MINUTES OF MEETING 386 – 24TH MAY 2010

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

that minutes of Meeting No 386 – 24th May 2010, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Conferences (Minute Reference 386.5)

In response to a question from Councillor Robinson Chief Executive confirmed that it was Council policy that anyone attending a Conference (ie: paid out of the Conferences Budget) is invited to bring a report back to committee.

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

to recommend that Council invite those members attending a conference (ie: paid out of the Conferences Budget) to bring an oral report back to the relevant committee.

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387.4 SIGNING OFF THE 2009/10 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Director advised that at its meeting on the 10th May 2010 Council delegated authority to the Corporate & Central Services Committee to sign off the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2010, in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts & Audit) Regulations (NI) 2006.

The Department of the Environment, Local Government Division had directed that the Annual Accounts are to be submitted to it by 30th June 2010.

Financial Statements at 31st March 2010 were circulated. The Director explained the accounts in detail at the meeting, making particular reference to the increase in the District Fund balance and responded to members' questions.

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

that Committee sign off the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2010 in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts & Audit) Regulations (NI) 2006.

- * **Councillor McKeown left the meeting at 8.09pm.**

387.5 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for Period 3, 2010/11 drawn on the Council's Revenue and Capital Bank Accounts were circulated.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the payments are made.

- * **Alderman Connolly left the meeting at 8.09pm and returned at 8.12pm during consideration of the above matter.**
- * **Head of Corporate and Development Services arrived at the meeting during consideration of the above matter.**

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

to recommend that accounts to the value of £719,793.37 from the Revenue Account and £33,446.26 from the Capital Account for Period 3, 2010/11 be approved for payment.

387.6 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT - July & August 2010

The Director advised that as Council has agreed that there will be no committee meetings in July & August except for urgent business, **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that authority be delegated to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve the payment of the accounts for Periods 4 and 5, 2010/11.

Details of the payments made for the 2 months will be tabled for members' information at the September committee meeting.

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

to recommend that authority be delegated to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve the payment of the accounts for Periods 4 and 5, 2010/11.

387.7 PROVISIONAL ACTUAL PENNY PRODUCT 2009/2010

The Director advised that Land and Property Services (LPS) has now completed an initial assessment of the Actual Penny Product (APP) out turn for the financial year 2009/10.

The Finalisation for Ballymoney results in a positive out turn of £123,913.99. This is made up of two elements, an out turn of £119,307.14 plus a grant compensatory payment of £4,606.85 for the reduction in CAP from £500K to £400K. However the Council elected to defer monies associated with the BT revaluations and arising from that a repayment of £5,558.89 will be deducted from the finalisation figure. This gives a net additional payment to the Council of £118,355.10

The total losses from the Rates Income for 2009/10 amount to £1116916.01 which covers allowances, vacancies, irrecoverable and the cost of collection.

The finalisation figures are subject to audit but LPS do not anticipate material changes to the figures.

In response to a query, the Director advised the level of vacancies in both domestic and non domestic properties. She also advised that she had requested from Land & Property Services, an outstanding debt report at 31 March 2010.

* **Councillor McCamphill left the meeting at 8.28pm during consideration of the above matter.**

387.8 DESKTOP, INTERNET AND EMAIL GUIDELINES

The Director advised that guidelines regarding the use of PC's/ laptops Internet and Email Systems by employees and councilors have been updated. The basic aim of the guidelines is to ensure that neither employees, councillors, nor the Council breaks the law, does anything unethical or anti-social or damages the interests of the Council.

The revised Guidelines (attached as Appendix A) are recommended for acceptance.

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

to recommend that Council approve the updated guidelines regarding the use of PC's/ laptops Internet and Email Systems by employees and councillors, attached as Appendix A.

387.9 APPROVAL OF PLACE FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES/PARTNERSHIPS

The Director advised that an application for premises to be approved as a venue for civil marriages/partnerships had been received for Lissanoure Castle, 11 Knockahollet Road, Loughguile, Cloughmills, Ballymena BT44 9JP.

The relevant documents were enclosed with the application and the fee of £400 has been paid. A full inspection of the premises has been carried out by the Registrar and an "Approved Place" checklist completed.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that Lissanoure Castle is approved as a venue for civil marriages/partnerships under the provisions of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 for a period of 3 years commencing on 2nd July 2010.

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

to recommend that Council approve Lissanoure Castle as a venue for civil marriages/partnerships under the provisions of the Marriage (NI) Order 2003 for a period of 3 years commencing on 2nd July 2010.

Councillor Stevenson wished to be recorded as an abstention from this proposal.

Councillor Robinson wished to be recorded as an abstention from this proposal.

* **Director of Central & Leisure Services left the meeting at 8.33pm.**

CORPORATE SERVICES

387.10 REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (RPA)

It has been announced that the Review of Public Administration (RPA) / Local Government Reform will not be going ahead in May 2011 as previously planned. Instead elections will be held next year for the existing 26 Councils.

A copy of letter dated 15th June 2010 from the Environment Minister, Edwin Poots, MLA, to the Speaker of the Assembly was circulated.

Chief Executive has received correspondence from NILGA advising of a 'Local Government Engagement Event' for Transition Committee Members to discuss taking forward the Minister's request for local government to provide a "plan to deliver real efficiency savings for ratepayers" to be held at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick on Tuesday 6th July 2010 from 9.30am-11.45pm.

* **Councillor McCamphill rejoined the meeting at 8.34pm during consideration of the above matter.**

* **Councillor Stevenson left the meeting at 8.35pm.**

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

to recommend that members of the Transition Committee be appointed to attend the 'Local Government Engagement Event' to be held by NILGA at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick on Tuesday 6th July from 9.30am – 11.45pm.

387.11 RESTRUCTURING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINING GROUP

In 2009 the Local Government Training Group (LGTG) agreed to restructure its method of operation in order to maximise the effectiveness of its contribution to capacity building during the local government reform and modernisation process. Implementation was, however, postponed due to uncertainty surrounding the RPA. Although the position on the RPA remains unclear, the LGTG has decided to proceed with the restructuring from September 2010.

The key features of the new structure will be:

- A smaller, strategically focused body which will be responsible for policy and resources; as such it will absorb the role of the current Budget Committee
- A group representing senior learning and development practitioners in the 11 new council clusters, to take the lead in operational aspects of capacity building.

Each of the ten council clusters outside Belfast will be responsible for selecting their representative from among the senior practitioners in the constituent councils. It is anticipated that a group representing elected members will be established by NILGA, similar to the former Steering Group for Elected Member Training.

The new strategic body will have six members, comprising two SOLACE representatives, one of whom will chair the group; the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Staff Commission; a representative of Belfast City Council; the Chair of the practitioners' group; and the Chair of the elected members' group.

387.12 NILGA – ANNUAL PLAN, SUBSCRIPTIONS AND COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

Council received NILGA's annual Work Plan 2010/11, Key Achievements paper 2009/10 and Annual Plan & estimates 2010/11 and decided to take up the offer to receive a presentation. Arrangements have been confirmed for NILGA representatives to attend the committee's meeting on Monday 27th September at 6.00pm.

387.13 LIMIT ON COUNCIL EXPENDITURE FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES 2010/11

The Department of Environment has advised that the Council's limit in respect of expenditure for special purposes in 2010/11 is £13,791.

387.14 ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

NILGA, in association with the Department of Environment's Road Safety Division, held a consultation event on 2nd June to ascertain and collate local government views on the Road Safety Strategy for NI 2010-2020 in order to develop a local government response to the consultation. Consideration is given in the consultation paper to local councils becoming more involved in road safety and whether the strategy should be underpinned with lower-level road safety plans. If the proposals are brought forward it will allow local government to work more closely with their communities to address specific road safety needs. A copy of the NILGA response to the consultation paper was circulated.

Members expressed concern at proposals to allow local councils to become more involved in the delivery of a Road Safety Strategy, if local authorities are not adequately resourced to deal with this very important issue.

- * **Alderman Connolly left the meeting at 8.48pm during consideration of the above matter.**

387.15 ROBERT DUNLOP MEMORIAL GARDEN PROJECT

Chief Executive updated members on progress on the Robert Dunlop Memorial Garden Project for which a practical completion certificate had now been issued,

Council now being responsible for all insurances on the site. With regard to the sculpture project this is expected to be delivered on or about October/November 2010. The commission includes for the transportation and installation of the sculpture. From the date of installation it is intended that Council will be exclusively responsible for the future insurance and maintenance of the sculpture. **It is recommended** that as was the case with the Joey Dunlop sculpture Council enter into a formal agreement with the group donating the sculpture and that consultation be entered into with the sculpture group in this regard.

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

to recommend that the Chief Executive be authorised to progress a formal draft agreement for Council's consideration in advance of receipt of the sculpture.

Committee agreed to receive a further update on the project and more accurate timeline for the installation of the sculpture should be available.

* **Councillor Stevenson rejoined the meeting, during consideration of this item, time: 9.00pm.**

387.16 STAFF MATTERS

16.1 Budget Statement on Public Sector Pay

Members will have picked up the aspect of yesterdays budget statement that related to public sector pay to the effect that public sector pay would be frozen for 2 years from next year for public sector employees earning more than £21,000 p.a.

LGE have issued a circular to councils on this, the main aspects of which are –

- the position on local government pay for 2010/11, where the employers have not offered an increase, is unaffected;
- contractual annual increments are unaffected so should continue to be paid; and
- the Employers Side through LGE will consult councils in the usual way ahead of any negotiations for 2011/12.

LGE officials will meet with the Treasury next week to clarify what the Governments expectations are (if any) in respect of local government.

A copy of the Local Government Employers Letter of 23rd June 2010 is attached for members information.

This being all the business the meeting closed at 9.23pm.

Appendix A: Desktop, Internet and Email Guidelines

APPENDIX A

Desktop, Internet and Email Guidelines

Desktop, Internet and Email Systems.

Usage Guidelines.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document outlines the policy established by Ballymoney Borough Council for Desktop PC/Laptop, Internet and email usage.
- 1.2 The basic aim of this document is to ensure that, in using your pc/laptop, the internet and email, neither you as an individual nor the Council breaks the law, does anything unethical or anti-social or damages the interests of the Council.
- 1.3 Council employees are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the equipment and privileges granted to them are not misused or abused in any way and should take any necessary steps to minimise the risk of any such events arising.
- 1.4 This policy may be amended from time to time to reflect changing circumstances; you will be informed of any such changes.

2. Users

- 2.1 New users should be notified to ICT preferably prior to their employment commencement, or if this is not possible as soon after their employment commences as possible, in writing (email notification will suffice). Details required are first name and surname (please ensure correct spelling is notified), department and office location.
- 2.2 Usernames and email addresses will not normally be issued to temporary staff whose tenure with Council is less than six months. These members of staff will be issued with generic usernames.
- 2.3 Details of staff members whose employment has ceased should be notified to ICT in writing as soon as their employment ceases (email notification will suffice) so that obsolete accounts can be disabled/deleted.
- 2.4 ICT staff will review user accounts every six months and notify Heads of Service of any undeleted accounts.

3. Desktop PC

- 3.1 The PC on your desk has been provided to facilitate efficient work practices as well as communications. The PC should not therefore be misused. Each PC is connected to or has the capability to be connected to the network. It is

essential therefore that the security systems in place are adhered to so as to minimise the possibility of unauthorised access. Every user will be allocated a username and password. It is important that your password is changed on a regular basis and that it is not revealed to anyone who could subsequently logon using your password.

- 3.2 If for any reason a user requires to access the system using another user's password written authorisation must first be obtained from the immediate line manager of whoever's user account is required to be accessed and the user themselves should be made aware that such access is taking place. Should this action require the assistance of the system administrators the authorisation must also be passed to them. An email will suffice for this purpose. Whilst accessing another user's account care must be taken only to access that information for which permission has been granted. Any reading or access of another user's data or information without explicit permission or authorisation from that user will be deemed an invasion of privacy and will therefore be subject to disciplinary procedure.
- 3.3 Paragraph 3.2 above may be over-ruled only on the explicit authorisation of the Chief Executive in circumstances where system administrators have reason to believe that a breach of the guidelines has occurred and evidence needs to be secured. In such circumstances the system administrators have the authority to lock down user accounts preventing access to the system until they can obtain the Chief Executive's authorisation to access these accounts.
- 3.4 Additional software must not be added to the Council PC's without prior authorisation from the system administrator; likewise, Council software should not be copied or transferred to any other PC without the administrator's authority. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary action, e.g. unlicensed copying of Council owned software. This extends to any software or programs, which are widely available to download from the Internet, (e.g.: screen savers, data tickers, etc) as these programs can be malicious and cause damage to the system.
- 3.5 Any work done on the PC should, where possible, be saved onto the central servers. Most users will have access to a "username" on ballymoney7 drive. This is to allow daily backups of work files to be carried out. Where this cannot be achieved and data is stored elsewhere it is the user's responsibility to ensure that adequate backup has been provided e.g. CD/DVD or USB memory sticks.
- 3.6 Any suspected breach of these guidelines should be reported immediately to the system administrators who will invoke paragraph 3.3 with immediate effect.

4. Internet and Email Access

The purposes of Internet access and email are as follows: -

- (i) Improved communication both externally and internally
- (ii) Increased efficiency in working practices/methods
- (iii) Availability of massive knowledge base at fingertips
- (iv) Reduction of administrative burden on staff

Unfortunately misuse of the system will hamper the achievement of these benefits and therefore a few guidelines for use of the system are laid out below: -

- 4.1 Private browsing of the Internet will be tolerated outside normal office hours (e.g.: lunchtime) especially for those who have no other access to the Internet – remember the Internet is provided as a tool for Ballymoney Borough Council. Unauthorised use will be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- 4.2 Downloading of illegal/offensive material will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- 4.3 Private emails will be allowed, but abuse of the privilege will result in its withdrawal.
- 4.4 Email is not however to be used for the spreading of gossip, chit chats, chain letters, messages that could constitute bullying or harassment, or distribution of offensive material – the latter will be a disciplinary matter.
- 4.5 Any emails of doubtful origin should be avoided if possible in case of viruses. If this cannot be achieved the latest virus checks should be applied – contact system administrator for assistance.
- 4.6 Only use email appropriately – email should not be used to substitute for face-to-face communication.
- 4.7 Email messages should only be sent to those employees to whom they are particularly relevant.
- 4.8 “Flame-mails” (emails that are abusive) can be a source of stress and damage work relationships. Hasty messages, sent without proper consideration can cause unnecessary misunderstandings.
- 4.9 If the message is confidential, the user must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality. The Council will be liable for any defamatory information circulated either within the organisation or to external users of the system.
- 4.10 Offers or contracts transmitted by email are as legally binding on the Council as those sent on paper.

- 4.11 Staff should make use of the Out of Office facility whenever they are not going to be in the office for any length of time e.g.: Annual Leave

Any issues arising in connection with these guidelines will be left to discretion of departmental management.

Please note software to monitor the system is in place.

5. **Passwords**

- 5.1 It is imperative that all logon passwords are now changed regularly and kept secret as someone knowing your password could logon under your name and through their actions cause you inconvenience. Always ensure your workstation is locked if for any reason you have to leave your desk. This can be done in 2 ways: -

(i) Press “Ctrl-Alt-Del” and click “Lock Workstation”

Or

(ii) Password protect your screen saver – for this to effective the screen saver must be set to activate at no more than say 5 minutes.

Using the first method is recommended but also use the second as a backup should you forget to apply the first.

- 5.2 Passwords should not be shared with/made known to other users. Each user will be assigned their own unique logon details and these only should be used. New users should be notified to ICT before they commence employment so that their details can be setup. Similarly ICT should be notified regarding users who have left the employment of Council to ensure that unauthorised access of Council systems is avoided.
- 5.3 If access is required to another user’s logon account (for example if they are on leave/sick) access will only be granted by ICT staff upon compliance with the procedure outlined in paragraph 3.2.
- 5.4 Passwords are required to be changed at intervals of no more than 180 days. The computer system will prompt users whenever passwords have expired and need replaced.
- 5.5 New passwords must meet certain requirements as detailed below:
- At least six characters in length
 - At least one uppercase character
 - At least one lowercase character
 - At least one numeric character
 - Must not include user’s name or any part of it

- No password can be repeated until after at least 3 changes

6. **Portable Equipment**

- 6.1 Certain members of staff/councillors are issued with portable ICT equipment such as laptops, PDA's and projectors. It is the responsibility of those who are issued with this equipment to ensure that it is kept safe and maintained to the condition in which it was received.
- 6.2 Any fault or problem with portable equipment should be reported immediately to ICT staff and the equipment made available to ICT staff for examination and repair.
- 6.3 All portable ICT equipment should be made available to ICT staff at least annually for inspection, upgrade and PAT testing. ICT staff will notify users when this is due to occur.

7. **Failure to comply with these guidelines**

- 7.1 Any breach of or failure to comply with these guidelines will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in accordance with Council's disciplinary procedure.