

RESOURCES TASK GROUP**Meeting No. 33 – 25th October 2010****Table of Contents**

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RESOURCES TASK GROUP

Minutes of Meeting No. 33 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, on Monday 25th October 2010 at 2.00 pm.

CHAIR Alderman James Simpson

PRESENT **Alderman**
F Campbell
C Cousley, Deputy Mayor

Councillors
B Kennedy, Mayor
J Finlay
M McCamphill
E Robinson

APOLOGIES Chief Executive (on leave)

IN ATTENDANCE Director of Borough Services,
Director of Central & Leisure Services,
Head of Corporate & Central Services

33.1 MINUTES – MEETING NO 32 – 28th JUNE 2010

It was proposed by Alderman Campbell seconded by Alderman Cousley and **AGREED:**

that the minutes of Meeting No. 32 on 27th September 2010, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

1.1 Budget – In Year Savings 2010/11

Director of Central and Leisure Services advised that the £2500 unpaid contribution to Lower Bann Partnership identified by CMT as savings had been utilised by the Development Committee to part finance a contribution towards the Townscape Heritage Initiative bid to Heritage Lottery Fund. The savings identified to date therefore stands at £53928, some £7000 short of that required by Council.

33.2 FINANCIAL REPORTING

Progress report at 27 September 2010, circulated, was reviewed.

Discussion ensued re frequency of publication of variance reports, currently quarterly at 3, 6, 8 and 12 months. The next variance report at 6 months would be available at the November meeting.

Director of Central and Leisure Services pointed out that full district fund summary and balance sheet had been available at Corporate & Central Services Committee when accounts were signed off and full accounts were available on the website. She would make copies available to members on request.

The Mayor pointed to the levels of savings achieved at year end across directorates/OCE as set out below, noting that borough services had the greatest number of operational services.

Central & Leisure Services Directorate	-£81844
Borough Services	£116197
Office of the Chief Executive	£17188
Overall surplus on services	£51541

The Director of Central & Leisure Services advised the meeting on funding ring-fenced for contribution to landfill site and funding to reserves and that £61,000 to offset rate had not been required.

It was confirmed that at 31st March 2010 £130,748 had been lodged to reserves with £150,000 to the capital account. £76,000 additional rates were expected against £118,000 received. However, Council had to pay back £120,000 of rates for 2008-09.

The Director of Central and Leisure Services also responded to questions on increase in assets, increase in reserves and loans position and commented on the low level of bank interest and savings on loan charges.

The meeting discussed the benefits of more access to information on monthly spending on service budgets and the Chair asked budget holders to comment on any significant variances in their service budgets at the next meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor McCamphill, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

that the quarterly financial reporting on variance reports be retained with officials commenting verbally at meetings on any adverse vacancies.

On being put to the meeting 2 members voted for and 4 against.

The Chair declared the motion lost.

Councillor Finlay suggested that Resources Task Group receive variance reports at 3 months, 6 months and monthly thereafter. However, Director of Central and Leisure Services indicated difficulties in delivering level of reporting suggested given current resource difficulties due to sickness and pressure of rate estimate preparations and it was agreed that 8 month report be considered at the January rates meeting.

Director of Borough Services indicated that there would remain a number of unknowns at the January meeting.

The Chair invited members to present to next meeting information available as to reporting arrangements in other councils.

33.3 VACANCY – HEAD OF AMENITIES

Following Notice of Motion at the Council meeting 928 (18th October 2010) the filling of the post of Head of Amenities was referred back to Resources Task Group for further discussion to take place and not to fill the post until it is thoroughly discussed.

The Director of Borough Services updated the meeting on the recruitment exercise for the post, approved at Resources Task Group 28 on 16th March 2010, the implementation having been deferred until budget to cover the cost of the recruitment exercise had been accumulated. Following advertising of the vacancy candidates had been shortlisted, an assessment exercise conducted and interviews held. However, no steps had been taken towards making an offer of appointment pending Council's decision on the motion before the meeting. Costs to date were estimated at £10,000.

Members discussed the further financial difficulties it will face in the light of a cut in general grant, its desire to secure savings through not filling posts, two posts in the last year not filled as agreed by management, the temporary vacancy arising from career break agreed at previous Resource Task Group and expected further vacancies in Leisure Services.

The Head of Corporate & Development Services, in response to comments by a member, clarified the duties to be delivered by the committee clerk post and other aspects of committee services support, including Council's decision making process in the matter.

Other issues which engaged members' attention included the role and activities and supervisory responsibilities of the Head of Amenities post in Borough Services, the projects to be delivered and services to be managed by this budget holder and the interim arrangements in place by Director of Borough Services to cover the responsibilities of the post in the interim, the Director responding to a range of issues raised by members, including the methodology and consultation requirements of any service departmental or organisational review. He also alluded to new provision to be delivered including safety of sports grounds and responded to comments on delivery of Building Control service.

The Chair invited members to consider the options available to it and to indicate any further issues it wished to discuss.

It was proposed by Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor McCamphill

to recommend that the post of Head of Amenities be filled forthwith.

As an amendment it was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Campbell

to recommend that the matter of filling the post be deferred to the Council Meeting on 1st November 2010.

On being put to the meeting the amendment was passed with four members voting for and 3 against, voting being recorded as follows at the request of a member:

FOR (4)

Alderman Campbell
Councillor Robinson
Councillor Finlay
Alderman Cousley

AGAINST (3)

Councillor Kennedy
Alderman Simpson
Councillor McCamphill

33.4 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

22nd November at 2pm in the McKinley Room.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm