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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of Corporate & Central Services Committee Meeting No 408 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House, on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012 at 7.00 pm.

**IN THE CHAIR:** Councillor I Stevenson

**PRESENT:**

**Aldermen**  
F Campbell  
H Connolly  
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor  
B Kennedy

**Councillors**  
J Atkinson  
W Blair  
A Cavlan  
J Finlay  
R Halliday  
R McAfee  
E Robinson, Mayor

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive [Items 1-10]  
Director of Central and Leisure Services [Items 11-19]  
Head of Corporate & Development Services [Items 1-10]  
Committee Clerk

**APOLOGIES:** M Storey, MLA

**408.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**408.2 MINUTES OF MEETING NO 407 – 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012**

It was proposed by Alderman Cousley, seconded by Councillor Atkinson and **AGREED:**

***to recommend that the Minutes of Meeting No 407 – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012, as circulated, be approved.***

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **408.3 CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Chair of Committee has asked that the Chief Executive explain to members why each committee and council meeting includes in the agenda an item on “Declarations of Interest”. The purpose of the item is to help members comply with the requirements of the Code of Local Government Conduct which they agreed to abide by when elected. The relevant provisions are reproduced below and any member seeking further information is referred to the full document. Staff are also bound by similar requirements.

#### **Extract from The Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct**

##### ***Part 3 – Declaration and Registration of Interests Pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests***

25. *Section 28 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 requires you to declare any pecuniary interest (including that of a spouse you are living with) that you may have in any matter coming before any council (including a committee or sub-committee meeting). Such interests will be recorded in the statutory register kept by your council for this purpose.*

26. *You should not speak or vote on a matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. If such a matter is to be discussed by your council, you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is being discussed.*

27. *You should also declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter arising at a council meeting (including a committee or sub-committee meeting). An interest will be significant where you anticipate that a decision on the matter might reasonably be deemed to benefit or disadvantage yourself to a greater extent than other council constituents.  
Private or personal interest also extends to your membership of, or association with, any business, club, society, voluntary body or other organisation.*

28. *You should declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter as soon as it becomes apparent. You should then withdraw from any council meeting (including a committee or sub-committee meeting) when the matter is being discussed. It is your own personal responsibility to determine, having regard to this code of conduct and council advice and guidance, whether you have any such interest.*

### **408.4 USE OF COUNCIL CHAMBER**

At CRCS 403 on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2012 it was recommended (and subsequently agreed by Council) that the following policy on use of Ballymoney Borough Council’s Chamber be adopted: -

“Use of Ballymoney Borough Council’s Chamber is restricted to meetings of Council, main committees, PCSP, Causeway Coast & Glens Transition Committee (both in its voluntary and statutory forms), NI Housing Council, Causeway Coast & Glens Transition Management Team and joint committees of which Ballymoney BC is a constituent member.

Compass Advocacy’s Shadow Council for Ballymoney, Coleraine & Moyle will be permitted to use the room for meetings in accordance with the rules below. Similar shadow councils which represent any of the nine categories identified in the Northern Ireland Act 1998, either solely within Ballymoney Borough or in a wider area including Ballymoney Borough, may be permitted to use the room for meetings in accordance with the rules set out hereafter:

Use of the Council Chamber by a Shadow Council, where council has been asked and has agreed it may do so, will be permitted during normal working hours when the building is open to the public and the room is not required for other council-related business. A Shadow Council may make use of the chamber for no more than 3 meetings in any year. Advance notice of ten working days minimum must be given for each meeting and Council reserves the right to send an officer to observe the meetings.

This policy will be reviewed one year after implementation and may be amended by Council, giving one month’s notice to any affected organisations.”

The policy allows various specified bodies to use the chamber but does not provide flexibility for unforeseen situations. For example, in recent weeks the Mayor was asked if Council could supply a suitable venue for a meeting of a Ministerial Board at which the DOE Minister takes the chair – the policy does not allow such use.

Timing of the monthly Council meeting would have allowed Council to consider the matter and agree an exception to the policy if it was so minded; in the event an alternative venue was selected. That is not always the case and the Chief Executive was required on one occasion to decide on use of the chamber for DPP interviews where noisy building works disrupted the arranged room, without having any delegated authority in the matter.

To allow for such exceptions and ensure that member influence is brought to bear on the decision on whether or not to allow use of the chamber beyond the provisions of the policy, the committee may feel that Council should delegate authority to the Chief Executive to permit the chamber to be used on other occasions provided that: -

1. The Mayor is consulted about and agrees to the use and
2. A report is made to the next scheduled meeting of CRCS committee setting out details of the use granted and the reasons for it.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the policy be amended by adding the following words to the end of the first paragraph, after “... of which Ballymoney BC is a constituent member.”

“In exceptional cases, the Chief Executive may permit the chamber to be used on other occasions provided that the Mayor is consulted about and agrees to the use and a report is made to the next scheduled meeting of CRCS committee setting out the reasons for and details of the use granted.”

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

***to recommend that that the Use of Council Chamber policy be amended by adding the following words to the end of the first paragraph, after “... of which Ballymoney BC is a constituent member. In exceptional cases, the Chief Executive may permit the chamber to be used on other occasions provided that the Mayor is consulted about and agrees to the use and a report is made to the next scheduled meeting of CRCS committee setting out the reasons for and details of the use granted.”***

## **408.5 STAFF MATTERS**

### **5.1 Equal Pay Claims**

Six equal pay claims are now settled and the Tribunal has been advised. The gross payment to the claimants amounts to £14,807.61. The settlement figures will be paid via the payroll on 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

Councillor Robinson requested information on the overall cost of Single Status implementation. Chief Executive shall supply the information and put it in the record of committee.

## **408.6 ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

The Committee Chair has asked that members of committee are reminded of the provisions within Standing Orders which allow for items to be included in the agendas of committee meetings. Section 14 is the relevant part and is reproduced in full below.

In summary the chair may direct that any item of business is included on the agenda, with no limit on the number of such items. A member of the committee may submit one item to the Clerk for inclusion, provided five day's notice is given and the item is within the scope of the committee to consider (e.g. it is not the business of another committee).

Members should be aware that paragraph 14.1 requires that, at least 3 days before the meeting, the agenda is sent out. 3 days is interpreted as clear days i.e. the day of issue is not counted, nor is the day of the meeting, nor a Sunday or Public Holiday falling between the day of issue of the agenda and the meeting. Five days is also interpreted

as clear days. For example, if the committee meeting is on a Monday, the agenda will be sent out on the preceding Wednesday and a member wanting an item included must supply it to the Clerk on the preceding Monday. It is equally acceptable that the member supplies the item to the officer presenting the report to the committee.

### **EXTRACT FROM STANDING ORDERS**

#### **14: ORDER OF BUSINESS IN COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

14.1 *At least three days before every meeting of a committee or sub-committee the Clerk shall send to every member and to every other person entitled to receive the papers of the committee or sub-committee a copy of the agenda for the meeting.*

14.2 *The agenda shall include:-*

- (a) all items of business which have been or are deemed to have been referred to the committee or sub-committee by the council or by another committee or sub-committee;*
- (b) all reports submitted to the committee or sub-committee by the Clerk;*
- (c) any item of business directed to be included by the person appointed to preside at the meetings of the committee or sub-committee; and*
- (d) any other item of relevant business which has been given to the Clerk by a member of the committee or sub-committee. Five days' notice is required in such cases and no member (other than the person appointed to preside at meetings of the committee or sub-committee) may give notice of more than one item of business for any one meeting.*

14.3 *Subject to any directions given by the person appointed to preside at the meetings of the committee or sub-committee, the items of business shall be arranged in such an order as the Clerk thinks best.*

Councillor Finlay expressed concern that on more than one occasion items had been raised at the end of a meeting that were not on the agenda for consideration. He felt that if members did have an item to raise they should inform the Chair at the beginning of a meeting.

Councillor Robinson considered that the Chief Executive needed to have a certain measure of discretion to deal with business in a timely manner, although she did take on board Councillor Finlay's comments. While the Mayor's Business was an item on the Council Agenda for consideration, the Mayor had to be careful what to include, as it may be deemed controversial for some.

Chief Executive reiterated the provisions within Standing Orders as set out above, requiring notice to be given and cautioned allowing items to be raised at the meeting in respect of which no notice had been given.

## **408.7 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

### **7.1 Vacancy Control System**

Local Government Reform Joint Forum (LGRJF) Circular, LGRJF/03, October 2012, on the application of vacancy control procedures within local government has been agreed by the by the LGRJF and is issued by the Local Government Staff Commission as a statutory recommendation for adoption by the 26 councils (including Environment Health & Building Control Group Committees), Arc 21, SWAMP, The North West Region Waste Management Group and Staff Commissioning, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council comply with the direction given by the Local Government Staff Commission on vacancy control procedures.

### **7.2 Local Consultation and Negotiation Forums at Transition Committee Level**

Local Government Reform Joint Forum (LGRJF) Circular/04, October 2012, on model terms of reference and operating arrangements for local consultation and negotiation forums at transition committee level has been agreed by the LGRJC and issued by the Local Government Staff Commission as a statutory recommendation for adoption by councils with immediate effect.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council comply with the direction given by the Local Government Staff Commission on model terms of reference and operating arrangements for local consultation and negotiation forums at transition committee level.

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

***to recommend that Council comply with the directions given by the Local Government Staff Commission on vacancy control procedures and on model terms of reference and operating arrangements for local consultation and negotiation forums at transition committee level.***

## **408.8 CONSULTATION - REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION**

Draft response to the consultation questionnaire on the review of the Local Government Staff Commission was circulated.



**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council endorses the draft response.

Councillor Finlay felt that when RPA comes into effect there would be no need for the Staff Commission, their duties could be handled by the new Councils or outsourced. Alderman Kennedy concurred with Councillor Finlay's comments and suggested winding up the organisation as once new Councils established the commission's role would be redundant.

Chief Executive highlighted the benefits, for managers, in terms of service provision in having a Staff Commission or an organisation like the Staff Commission, during the Transition period.

It was proposed by Councillor Finlay, seconded by Alderman Kennedy:

***to recommend to Council that the day after the Causeway Coast District Council is elected, the Staff Commission be dismissed.***

Councillor Cavlan felt the Staff Commission was useful for management, some of its services being free of charge.

Chair put the motion to committee, 7 voted for, 2 voted against and the Chair declared the motion carried.

#### **408.9 COUNCIL NOMINEES TO NILGA**

At the AGM in 2011, Council agreed to use the d'Hondt formula to allocate Council's four seats on NILGA; three went to DUP and one to SF. As a result of changes since the AGM, the d'Hondt formula now produces a different outcome; all four places are allocated to DUP. That party has advised that its nominees for the NILGA places are Councillor Evelyne Robinson, Alderman Cecil Cousley, Councillor Jason Atkinson & Councillor Ian Stevenson.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Ballymoney Borough Council's nominees to NILGA are Councillor Evelyne Robinson, Alderman Cecil Cousley, Councillor Jason Atkinson & Councillor Ian Stevenson.

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

***to recommend to Council that Ballymoney Borough Council's nominees to NILGA are Councillor Evelyne Robinson, Alderman Cecil Cousley, Councillor Jason Atkinson & Councillor Ian Stevenson.***

#### 408.10 CONFERENCES

Applications have been received as follows for attendance at Urban Regeneration Conference, "How can Towns & Cities Drive Economic Recovery" in Belfast on 20<sup>th</sup> November. Fee £175 (special rate for elected members through NILGA £125)

Alderman B Kennedy  
Councillor E Robinson

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the two applications be approved.

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

***to recommend to Council that Alderman B Kennedy and Councillor E Robinson attend the at Urban Regeneration Conference, "How can Towns & Cities Drive Economic Recovery" in Belfast on 20<sup>th</sup> November at a rate of £125.***

- \* Chief Executive left the meeting at 7.34pm.
- \* Head Corporate and Development Services left the meeting at 7.34pm.
- \* Alderman Kennedy left the meeting at 7.34pm.
- \* Director Central and Leisure Services arrived at the meeting at 7.36pm.

#### CENTRAL SERVICES

#### 408.11 CREDITORS PAYMENTS

The Director advised the matter was deferred to this month's committee meeting.

The minute of last month's meeting is reproduced below for members' information. -

*"In the Finance Staffing Review report approved by Council in July 2012 a number of service improvements were identified. One was regarding moving to a system of paying Creditors on a weekly basis. This would bring the Council into line with good practice on prompt payment of suppliers and also meet the 10 day Government recommended payment time.*

*A pilot exercise of weekly payments was introduced at the beginning of September and this has operated successfully for the first two weeks. By the date of the committee meeting a 3<sup>rd</sup> payment will have been made.*

*To date more than 60% of the payments are made by BACS and efforts will be made to bring BACS payments closer to 100%. As payments are being made weekly it will be necessary to delegate authority to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve the payments. The value of payments made during the month will be reported to committee for information. The Treasurers' Advices will also be circulated to Members. This can be done at the committee meeting or a small subcommittee could be established which could meet just prior to the main committee. Membership of the Subcommittee could rotate on a monthly basis.*

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that authority is delegated to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve payments on a weekly basis. Committee is requested to consider establishing a small Subcommittee, say of 4 members, to review payments made during the month.

*Discussion ensued about the need to pay invoices earlier than 30 days.*

*The Director advised that the Minister of the Department of Finance and Personnel had committed NI Executive departments to pay invoices within 10 days and that as councils are part of the government sector they were being encouraged to pay suppliers within 10 days in the current economic climate. In response to a query the Director advised that many creditors are now requesting their payments early. She advised that weekly payments continued to be made to assist individuals, local business and to avail of discount. Members agreed that a meeting prior to the commencement of the committee would enable interested members to view the Treasurers' Advices.*

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

***that the matter be deferred to the next meeting."***

Department of the Environment "Guidance on Payment of Invoices" detailing the recommendations of the Department regarding the prompt payment of invoices was circulated. Appended to the circular is a revised Schedule 10 of the Accounts Direction for 2012/13 which has to be included in the 2012/13 Annual Accounts, which will detail the prompt payment of invoices for the year.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council continue with the processing and payment of invoices on a weekly basis so as to meet the 10 day Government recommended payment time and that authority is delegated to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve the payments. As already agreed a meeting will be held at 6.30pm on the day of the committee meeting to enable members to view the Treasurers Advices.

\* **Alderman Kennedy returned to the meeting at 7.41pm during consideration of the above matter.**

Alderman Campbell expressed his interest in continuing to view the Treasurers Advices at 6.30pm on the day of the committee meeting, if convenient.

Director shall explore emailing the information and/or sending the information by post and having it available on the day of the meeting for any member

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

***to recommend that Council continue with the processing and payment of invoices on a weekly basis so as to meet the 10 day Government recommended payment time and that authority is delegated to the Director of Central & Leisure Services to approve the payments.***

As already agreed a meeting will be held at 6.30pm on the day of the committee meeting to enable members to view the Treasurers Advices. The Director will be available to provide information and answer any queries.

#### **408.12 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Treasurers Advices detailing Revenue and Capital payments for October were circulated at the meeting.

The Director responded to a number of member queries.

\* **Councillor Atkinson left the meeting at 8.00pm.**

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

***to approve the Payments made in Period 7 2012/13 up to 22 October 2012 of:  
Revenue Account £270,395.63  
Capital Account £ 16,182.00***

#### **408.13 COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES – DEPENDANTS' CARERS' ALLOWANCE**

The Department has now determined new maximum rates of dependants' carers' allowance payable under the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

A copy of the formal determination, detailing the new rates is attached as Appendix A. It is Council's practice to pay the maximum rates.

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

***to recommend that Council pay the maximum rates of dependants' carers' allowance payable under the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.***

#### **408.14 DRAFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2013 - CONSULTATION**

The Department of the Environment has issued for consultation a copy of the draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 which it proposes to make.

A copy of the consultation document was circulated.

The Director drew members attention to the automatic enrolment of employees into an occupational pension scheme and advised that it would apply to the Council from 1 April 2014. She advised that it did not apply to Councillors because they were not employees.

Comments should be submitted to the Department by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012.

\* **Councillor Atkinson returned to the meeting at 8.16pm.**

No comments were offered.

#### **408.15 POTENTIAL INSURANCE CLAIM**

The Director advised that Council has been notified of a potential asbestos related insurance claim dating back to the 1970 -1973 period and given the age of the incident there are very few records available. We have been able to confirm who the insurance brokers were at the time but they have been unable to ascertain who insurance was placed with at the time in question. Our current insurers have in light of this advised that we take legal advice on the matter regarding the potential inherited liabilities Ballymoney Borough Council may have relative to this claim. We are currently looking into this matter in conjunction with DOE who will hopefully be able to indicate what areas of responsibility transferred in 1973 and to whom they transferred in case we may be able to redirect the claim.

Given the advice of our insurers Council **approval is sought** to obtain legal advice on the matter and to meet any associated costs in the first instance, any possibility of cost recovery will not be known until more investigation into the claim.

**IT WAS AGREED** that the Director obtain further information and bring a report back to committee.

Councillor Robinson requested the additional information be brought to Council meeting, if it is available sooner.

**408.16 BUSINESS PLANS 2012/13 – FINANCE, ICT AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

Attached as Appendix B are annual business plans for Finance, ICT and Human Resources (circulated).

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Business Plans are approved.

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

***to recommend that Council approve the Finance, ICT and Human Resources Business Plans 2012/13.***

**408.17 EMPLOYMENT AGENCY SERVICES – TENDER**

The Council in January 2012 agreed to jointly tender with the Causeway Cluster Councils for the Provision of Employment Agency Services. The tender process was a framework approach involving Coleraine and Ballymoney Borough Councils and to which Limavady and Moyle Councils can elect to join at a later date. The contract is for a 3 year period with the option to extend for 1 further year. Coleraine acted as lead council in the tendering process. The tender was publicly advertised on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2012 and 6 tenders were received by the closing date from Diamond Recruitment, Grafton Recruitment, Brook Street, MPA, Riada Resourcing and Fusion 21. The tenders were evaluated by a panel of four officers. The highest scoring tender was that received from Diamond Recruitment. While this was a joint tendering exercise the successful tenderer will sign a separate contract agreement with each Council.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the appointment of Diamond Recruitment for the provision of Employment Agency Services for a 3 year period commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012 with the option to extend for 1 further year.

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

***to recommend that Council approve the appointment of Diamond Recruitment for the provision of Employment Agency Services for a 3 year period commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012 with the option to extend for 1 further year.***

Councillor Robinson questioned whether there was any advantage to Council using Employment Agency Staff.

The Director advised that Employment Agency Staff were used to fill short term and seasonal posts and to provide cover for sickness absence. She advised that the cost was cheaper for the first 12 weeks but under the new Employment Agency Workers

Regulations from Week 13 the Agency Worker would receive comparable rates to the existing post holder although there was a saving on employer's pension contributions.

#### **408.18 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2011/12**

In early October it came to light that the Net Book Values for land and buildings included in the Balance Sheet at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 may not provide a true and fair view. This is due to the application of indices supplied by Land & Property Services. The previously approved methodology had been challenged and as a result we are required to review the net book valuations of land and buildings for both 2010/11 and 2011/12. The Northern Ireland Audit Office had approved on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012 a revised methodology relating to the indexation of land and buildings for 2010/11 and 2011/12. This involves a considerable amount of work in a very short timescale. Work has commenced on the recalculation of asset values and it is hoped to have revised accounts to issue at the committee meeting.

Council has granted authority to this committee to sign off the revised accounts for 2011/12.

- \* **Councillor Cavlan left the meeting at 9.05pm.**
- \* **Councillor Atkinson left the meeting at 9.07pm.**

The Director advised that the revised Accounts were not yet complete but hoped they would be available for the Council meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

She advised that if the Accounts were not certified by 31<sup>st</sup> October a notice would be published on the Council website stating the reason for this. In response to a query from Councillor Finlay she advised that the recalculations did not affect the surplus for the year, but would reduce the value of the Fixed Assets on the Balance Sheet at 31 March 2012.

#### **408.19 NON DOMESTIC PROPERTY DISTRICT RATES**

The Chair of Committee asked for this item to be put on the agenda so that consideration could be given to ways, if possible, to reduce the non-domestic rates to benefit businesses in the Borough.

The Council currently sets 2 District Rates – a non-domestic property rate and a domestic property rate. This is due to the fact that the 2 sets of properties are currently valued on different basis. Non-domestic property is valued on a rental value basis whereas domestic property is valued on a capital value basis.

When the Council sets the District Rates the non-domestic rate is calculated first and to this a conversion factor is applied to calculate the domestic rate. The percentage increase (or decrease) in the rates for the year is the same for both non-domestic and domestic properties.

The Director read the latest news from DFP Rating Policy website,

*“The Department of Communities and Local Government in England recently announced the postponement until 2017 of the Non Domestic Rates Revaluation in England on the grounds of giving businesses certainty over the next few years to concentrate on delivering growth.*

*The circumstances in England are difference to those in Northern Ireland. The rest of the UK had a Revaluation in 2010 but NI has not undertaken one since 2003. There is no technical reason why NI cannot proceed alone, as it has done in the past. Furthermore, the local business community has been urging the Department to carry out a Revaluation as soon as possible, to update the values and redistribute the rating burden.*

*The Minister, Sammy Wilson, is inclined to go ahead with the Revaluation here but wishes to take into account the views of the DFP Committee before a final decision is made.”*

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

***to recommend that Council write to Finance Minister, Sammy Wilson, to proceed with the revaluation of non-domestic properties, for the benefit of local businesses.***

Councillor Robinson expressed caution that if Business Rates were to go down, someone will have to pay the difference. Councillor Finlay stated it was fair that non domestic properties do get revalued.

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

**Appendix A:** Councillors' Allowances – Dependants' Carers' Allowance

**Appendix B:** Human Resources, ICT and Finance Business Plans 2012/13







Clerk & Chief Executive of each District Council, **Local Government Policy Division**  
 Finance Officer of each District Council,  
 Mr D McCallan, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Finance Branch  
 Local Government Association, 1st Floor  
 Cllr R Ferguson, Secretary, National Association of Millennium House  
 of Councillors 17-25 Great Victoria Street  
 Mr L Hannaway, Honorary Secretary, Society of Malone Lower  
 Local Authority Chief Executives, **BELFAST**  
 Ms J McCafferty, Chairperson, Association of BT2 7BN  
 Local Government Finance Officers  
 Mr A Kerr, Chief Executive, Local Government Telephone: 028 9041 6709  
 Staff Commission, Facsimile: 028 9041 6737  
 Email: Diane.mccafferty@doeni.gov.uk  
 Mr D Murphy, Secretary, Northern Ireland Local Your reference:  
 Government Officers' Superannuation Committee, Our reference: DO1-11-3503  
 Mr J Quinn, Chief Executive, Arc21,  
 Mr G Craig, Finance Director, Arc21  
 Ms L Mason, Chief Local Government Auditor  
 Mr R Allen, Director, Local Government Audit  
 Other Interested Parties  
 Date: 15 October 2012

**CIRCULAR No: LG 23/12**

Dear Sir/Madam

**DEPENDANTS' CARERS' ALLOWANCE – FROM 1 OCTOBER 2012**

The Department has now determined new maximum rates of dependants' carers' allowance, payable under the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

A copy of the formal determination is attached, detailing the new rates, with effect from 1 October 2012.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane McCafferty'.

**DIANE McCAFFERTY**

Enc.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2011**  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PAYMENTS TO COUNCILLORS) REGULATIONS**  
**(NORTHERN IRELAND) 2012**  
**DETERMINATION OF MAXIMUM RATES OF DEPENDANTS' CARERS'**  
**ALLOWANCE**

The Department of the Environment makes this determination, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 **(a)**, and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 **(b)**. With effect from 1 October 2012, the maximum amounts of dependants' carers' allowance shall not exceed the amounts specified in the following table:-

| STANDARD CARE   | SPECIALISED CARE  |
|---|-------------------|
| £6.19 per hour  | £12.38 per hour   |
| £161.00 per month   | £322.00 per month |
| <b>Maximum payments per member, per month, shall not exceed £322.00</b> |                   |

Dated this **15** day of October 2012.

*Linda MacCarthy*

A senior officer of the Department of the Environment

(a) 2011 c.10 (N.I).  
(b) S.R. 2012 No.85.



## Appendix B

## Human Resources Business Plan 2012/2013

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| <b>Purpose of Service</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• To lead on the development of policy, setting of standards and the promotion of best practice in all areas of human resource management;</li> <li>• To support the mainstreaming of equality and diversity throughout the Council's services;</li> <li>• To ensure that the Council's HR practices fully support and complement its aims and objectives, meet legal requirements and meet best practice;</li> <li>• To maintain and develop employee and industrial relations.</li> </ul> <p>The department aims to provide an excellent service to all with whom it has contact.</p>   |
| <b>Service Priorities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To complete the outstanding aspects of Single Status.</li> <li>• To complete our Equality Impact Assessment Timetable and put mechanisms in place to ensure the screening of all new/revised policies.</li> <li>• To complete an Annual Progress Report on Section 75.</li> <li>• To complete a 3-year Equality and Disability Action Plan.</li> <li>• To continue training and development initiatives which will effectively prepare staff for the challenges of RPA within current budget constraints.</li> <li>• To prepare for changes under the Pension Auto-enrolment Scheme.</li> <li>• To complete Freedom of Information requests via Tascomi Te Care.</li> <li>• 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 organization.</li> <li>• To ensure that Equality and Diversity are effectively mainstreamed across the Council and informs the decision making process.</li> <li>• To monitor compliance of the Council's Attendance Improvement Programme.</li> <li>• To develop a Well-being policy which incorporates initiatives which create a healthy working environment and maximise attendance and effectiveness at work.</li> <li>• To continue working with HR Cluster Group to develop policies and measures which will ease the transition to the new Causeway Council.</li> <li>• Continue to maximise the use of IT to improve service delivery.</li> <li>• Include all employees at JDLC and Knock Road Depot on the electronic clocking system.</li> <li>• Continue to monitor the operation of the Agency Workers Regulations.</li> <li>• To implement staffing reviews – (i) amalgamation of DPP and Community Safety Sectors; (ii) within the Finance section; (iii) within the JDLC.</li> <li>• Continue to work with the Health &amp; Safety Executive on the recommendations set out in HSE Management Standards report.</li> <li>• To complete Equality &amp; Diversity Training for all employees.</li> </ul> |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work with HR Cluster Group to tender for the provision of Employment Agency Services.</li> <li>• To develop a comprehensive Work-Life Balance Policy to meet changing needs.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Staffing</b>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 full-time and 1 part-time</li> <li>• Continue to develop staff in terms of relevant HR competencies, good practice/standards and changes in/introduction of new legislation</li> <li>• Work placements via Triangle Housing Association, A4E programme and various schools and colleges.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Key Partners</b><br><br><b>Key Partners Cont'd</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council members and officers</li> <li>• Local Government Staff Commission</li> <li>• Local Government Training Group</li> <li>• Employers for Childcare</li> <li>• North Time Data</li> <li>• Hallmark Solutions</li> <li>• Employers Organisation</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Joint Council</li> <li>• Recognised Trade Unions (GMB, Unite, NIPSA)</li> <li>• People &amp; Performance Management Association</li> <li>• Chartered Institute of Personnel &amp; Development</li> <li>• Training Providers</li> <li>• Occupational Health (Occupational Health Unit, Cullybackey Health Centre)</li> <li>• Carecall</li> <li>• Equality Commission</li> <li>• Labour Relations Agency</li> <li>• Diamond Recruitment</li> <li>• Access NI</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Resource Management</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work within budget limits – Budget £117,611</li> <li>• Accurate completion of statutory returns</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Results</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of Single Status by March 2013</li> <li>• Completion of EQUIA timetable – ongoing</li> <li>• Completion of Annual Progress Report on Section 75 by October 2012</li> <li>• Completion of 3-year Equality and Disability Action Plan by February 2013</li> <li>• Corporate Training Programme based on Needs Analysis implemented – ongoing</li> <li>• Continued updating/reviewing of policy and policy development in line with changes in/new legislation - ongoing</li> <li>• Reports/statutory returns completed within deadlines – ongoing</li> <li>• Implementation of the Pension auto-enrolment - ongoing</li> <li>• All Freedom of Information requests dealt with within required timescales</li> <li>• Monitor compliance of Council's Attendance Improvement Programme – ongoing</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health and Wellbeing Programme established by March 2013</li><li>• Inclusion of all employees on the electronic clocking system at JDLC and Knock Road Depot by October 2012</li><li>• Monitor the operation of Agency Workers Regulations - ongoing</li><li>• Staffing Reviews (i) amalgamation of DPP and Community Safety sectors to the new PCSP arrangements in place by May 2012 (ii) implementation within Finance section by March 2013 and (iii) implementation within JDLC by March 2013</li><li>• Implementation of recommendations of HSE Management Standards Stress Report – ongoing</li><li>• Completion of Equality and Diversity training by June 2012</li><li>• New Causeway Cluster Contract for the Provision of Agency Staff awarded and in operation by December 2012</li><li>• Development of Work-Life Balance Policy by March 2013</li></ul> |
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**ICT Business Plan 2012/2013**

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| <b><u>Vision</u></b>        | To provide and maintain ICT systems using the latest technology to a minimum of 99% availability   |
| <b>Business Development</b> | <p>Ensure all available upgrades applied within 30 days of availability</p> <p>Respond to IT fault reports within 2 hrs</p> <p>Maintain 99% availability of central IT systems</p> <p>Disposal of obsolete equipment under WEEE regulations</p> <p>Timeware roll out to additional sites</p> <p>MS Office upgrade to latest version</p> <p>Implementation of Net Consent software</p> <p>Co-operation with Cluster grouping</p> <p>Development of Business Continuity Plan</p> <p>Hardware upgrades – server, laptop and desktop</p> <p>Timeware upgrade to include access control</p> <p>Firewall upgrade</p> <p>Extension of MPS to additional sites</p> <p>Installation of 100MB leased line</p> <p>Installation of public wifi – JDLC and Town Hall</p> <p>MRM Web enabled</p> <p>Tascomi on-line portal</p> |

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| <b>Staff</b>               | <p>1 part-time<br/> 1 full-time<br/> 2012/2013 Budget £98,330<br/> Attend courses/seminars as and when required to keep up to date with latest technology<br/> Train full-time employee in Server 2008 management<br/> Exchange training</p>  |
| <b>External Liaison</b>    | <p>Maintain membership of Local Government IT Officers Group</p>  |
| <b>Resource Management</b> | <p>Maintain and develop ICT systems within budgetary limits.</p>  |
| <b>External Standards</b>  | <p>Systems developed in conjunction with current best practice and utilising latest technology</p>  |
| <b>Results</b>             | <p>Ensure all available upgrades applied within 30 days of availability - ongoing<br/> Respond to IT fault reports within 2 hrs - ongoing<br/> Maintain 99% availability of central IT systems - ongoing<br/> Disposal of obsolete equipment under WEEE regulations - ongoing<br/> MS Office 2010 upgrades – ongoing<br/> Upgrade of servers to Server 2008<br/> Upgrade of Exchange to Exchange 2010<br/> Installation of NAS units in Town Hall and Riada Stadium<br/> Off-site backup storage<br/> Mail and file archive solution<br/> Upgrade of Broadband links<br/> Upgrade of UPS devices in server room and JDLC to 8hr availability<br/> Hardware upgrades – server and desktops</p> |



### Finance Business Plan 2012/2013

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| <b><u>Vision</u></b>        | To provide accurate, relevant, timely financial information and ensuring the timely and accurate payment of staff, councillors and creditors enabling effective management  |
| <b>Business Development</b> | <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 10 days</p> <p>Maximise recovery of 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>Implementation of weekly supplier payments to meet Government's 10 target</p> <p>Electronic purchase ordering</p> <p>Implementation of internal transfers system</p> |

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|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Staff</b>               | <p>3 full-time and 3 part-time<br/> 2012/2013 Budget £292,496<br/> Attend courses/seminars as and when required to keep up to date with latest standards/practice<br/> Train staff in latest standards/legislation</p>  |
| <b>External Liaison</b>    | <p>Maintain membership of Association of Government Finance Officers<br/> Maintain membership of Local Government Benchmarking Group<br/> Regular communication with external Auditor<br/> CIPFA guidance</p>   |
| <b>Resource Management</b> | <p>Work within budgetary limits<br/> Accurate completion of statutory returns</p>   |
| <b>External Standards</b>  | <p>Compliance with IFRS<br/> Meet external deadlines<br/> Implementation of new accounting guidelines</p>   |
| <b>Results</b>             | <p>Continual updating of relevant standards, guidelines, legislation, best practice – ongoing<br/> Reports provided by deadlines - ongoing<br/> All returns completed on time - ongoing<br/> Implement and update internal financial controls - ongoing<br/> Accurate payment of wages and salaries - ongoing<br/> Ensure accurate payment of creditors within 30 days – ongoing with new 10 day target<br/> Recovery of outstanding debt - ongoing<br/> Maximise return from investments – ongoing<br/> Staffing review – efficiency savings<br/> Implementation of BACS for suppliers<br/> Implementation of electronic Fixed Assets Register<br/> Extended use of pressure seal stationery<br/> Email functionality introduced for payroll and creditors' advices<br/> On-line receipting of payments received</p> |