

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Finance & General Purposes Committee

Meeting No 345 – 24th July 2006

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**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Finance & General Purpose Committee Meeting No 345 held in the McKinley Room, Riada House on Monday 24th July 2006 at 4 pm.

In the Chair: Councillor Audrey Patterson

Present: **Councillors**
A Cavlan B Kennedy
P McGuigan, MLA D McKay
E Robinson I Stevenson
M Storey, MLA

Aldermen
F Campbell H Connolly
C Cousley J Simpson

Apologies: Councillor J Finlay (Mayor)
Councillor T McKeown

In Attendance: Director of Central & Leisure Services (1-8)
Head of Corporate & Development Services (9-13)
Committee Clerk

345.1 Minutes – Meeting No 344 – 26 June 2006

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

that the minutes of Meeting No 344, on 26 June 2006, as circulated, be confirmed as a correct record.

345.2 Election of Vice Chair

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

that Alderman Cousley be elected to the post of Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

CENTRAL SERVICES

Councillors Cavlan, McGuigan and Alderman Simpson joined the meeting (Time: 4.05pm)

Alderman Connolly joined the meeting (Time: 4.20pm)

345.3 Accounts For Payment

Treasury advice schedules detailing payments for Period 4, 2006/07 drawn on the Council's Revenue and Capital Bank Accounts were circulated at the meeting.

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

to recommend that accounts to the value of £851,930.60 from the Revenue Account and £47,819.94 from the Capital Account be approved for payment.

Head of Corporate and Development Services joined the meeting (Time: 4.25pm)

345.4 Councillors Allowances – Special Responsibility Allowance

The revised maximum amounts of Special Responsibility Allowance for 2006/07 are:

- £11,482 per annum for a council with a population not exceeding 50,000.
- £2296.40 maximum payable to any individual member.

A schedule of the current allocation of the allowance is attached as Appendix A.

This matter was deferred from last months meeting. At the meeting it was suggested that the committees that did not meet frequently should not be included in the allocation of the allowance.

Members considered the allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance for 2006/07.

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

to recommend that the special responsibility allowance be paid as detailed in the schedule attached as Appendix A and that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor chair the Lignite and Audit Committees.

345.5 Councillors Allowances – Travelling and Subsistence

The Department of the Environment has revised the levels of travelling and subsistence allowances payable to members of district councils, where expenditure has necessarily been incurred in the performance of an approved duty. The revised maximum rates effective from 1 April 2006 are attached as Appendix B. The rates for councillors are broadly in line with those of officers of councils.

It has been the practice of the council to pay the maximum rates.

A copy of the Departments Guidance Note is attached (Appendix B) for members' information.

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

to recommend that travelling and subsistence allowance are paid at the maximum rate, as detailed in Appendix B.

POLICY / LEGISLATION ISSUES**345.6 Equality Issues****345.6.1 Equal Opportunities Policy (Revised)**

A copy of Council's Equal Opportunities Policy, as revised in accordance with the revised Local Government Staff Commission model policy, is submitted for adoption. The revisions include some minor amendments to tidy up and clarify content, take account of new legislation on sexual orientation and a new requirement for the establishment of a joint employer/employee equality opportunities committee for the purposes of reviewing progress, annually, in consultation with recognised trade unions, on the implementation of the policy and any equal opportunities and affirmative/positive action programmes.

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

to recommend that the revised Equal Opportunities Policy, dated July 2006, be adopted.

345.6.2 Equality Scheme 5 Year Review Report

Council's five year review report, circulated at the committee's last meeting, was presented for adoption.

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

to recommend that the 5 year review report on the Council's Equality Scheme be adopted.

345.7 Street Naming Policy (Draft EQIA)

This draft policy, previously circulated, was deferred from the committee's last meeting.

This draft policy and EQIA have been drawn up to ensure that Council complies with the legal advice it received in 2005/06, following from the first request for an Irish language sign in Rasharkin. Members will be aware that following a decision of council in February, to accept a committee recommendation to note this request, it faced a legal challenge and took further advice, which was to the effect that a policy should be drawn up.

That policy was tabled at the May and June meetings of committee and deferred at each for further consideration. It is before members again this month. We have also received an official complaint over the alleged failure to comply with our equality scheme in relation to this matter. A substantive reply must be issued by 11 August.

If there is any further delay in reaching a decision to consult on this policy it is likely that this will be challenged, so it is important that Council can justify the delay and that the reasons are fully documented.

Within the last week four additional requests for Irish language street signs have been received from residents of streets in Rasharkin and Dunloy (2 streets in each village). These applicants have asked to be kept informed of progress on the development of the policy and to be consulted.

During a lengthy discussion, concern was expressed about the tone and content of the report and the following information was requested.-

1. Clarification of the difficulties faced by Moyle District Council in adopting a similar policy

2. A copy of Derry City Council's policy
3. Clarification of Appendix 3
4. Implications of the recent decision of the European Parliament on dual language, in light of the policy that the Council is about to adopt
5. Details of the official complaint
6. Cost of implementing the policy

Councillor McGuigan advised that his party had met with the Chief Executive and proposed that the party leaders meet with the Chief Executive.

In response to a query from Alderman Simpson, the Director advised that she had written the report items under the Central Services section and the Head of Corporate and Development Services advised that she had written the report items under the Policy/Legislation Issues and Corporate Services section with some from the Chief Executive and others.

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

to defer the matter to next month's committee, to allow the Chief Executive time to provide the information requested and to give Party Leaders the opportunity to meet individually with the Chief Executive, so that the Council can move forward on the matter.

Councillor McKay requested that voting be recorded.

On being put to the meeting 7 members voted for the motion and 3 members voted against. Voting was recorded as follows:-

For the Motion (7)
 Alderman Campbell
 Alderman Cousley
 Councillor Kennedy
 Councillor Robinson
 Alderman Simpson
 Councillor Stevenson
 Councillor Storey

Against the Motion (3)
 Councillor Cavlan
 Councillor McGuigan
 Councillor McKay
Abstentions
 Alderman Connolly

The chair declared the motion carried and the matter deferred for one month.

The Deputy Director of Borough Services joined the meeting (Time: 5.05pm)

**345.8 *Best Value Legislation
Local Government Companies (Best Value) Order (NI) 2006***

The powers granted in this order appear sufficient as a stopgap measure to allow councils to continue to appoint officers and members to the board of existing companies formed in connection with the specified powers in the Schedule. They also additionally allow councils to establish new companies for any of these functions.

In both cases the Department is using Best Value legislation to give to councils the power to establish or participate in a company, because it believes that this "is necessary or expedient to permit or facilitate compliance with the duty (on councils) in section 1.1" (of the Best Value Act, 2002).

It was suggested that Council should respond welcoming this provision as a stopgap measure, provided that the Department will use the opportunity of RPA to give councils modern and up-to-date management powers to allow them to carry out their new role and functions more effectively. There is no reason why the new councils in NI should not have the same powers as comparators in the Great Britain. In particular, councils in NI should be a general power to establish and participate in companies in connection with the economic, environmental and social well being of their districts and in connection with their statutory functions. This would be a separate issue from the proposed well being power. This was agreed.

CORPORATE SERVICES

5.20 pm

345.9 Marketing Sub-Committee

A copy of report of the committee's meeting on 6 July was circulated, Appendix B

It was proposed by Councillor Storey, seconded by Councillor Stevenson

that Alderman Connolly be elected a member of the above sub-committee, as Alderman Cousley is currently an ex officio member.

It was proposed by Councillor McKay, seconded by Councillor McGuigan

that Councillor Cavlan be elected a member of the above sub-committee, as Alderman Cousley is currently an ex officio member.

On being put to the meeting, Alderman Connolly was declared elected.

345.10 Staff Matters

345.10.1 Job Share Application – Community Safety Co-Ordinator

Further to committee minute FC.344.5.b members will recall deferring consideration of the application, requesting a report on recruitment costs. The advertisement for the post was revised to include the minimum information necessary for applicants. This includes the post title, contract period, hours of work, salary, brief description, essential criteria, details of how further information can be obtained and how an application made. Due to the salary scale of the post, it is necessary and in accordance with Council Policy to place advertisements in two local papers in addition to the Belfast Telegraph. On the 4th July 2006, costs for the advertisement were obtained via the Council's contractors retained for this specific purpose. These are set out as follows:

Ballymoney Times	£594.00 +VAT
Coleraine Chronicle	£352.80 + VAT
Belfast Telegraph	£2129.08 + VAT
Total	£3075.88 + VAT

The total cost for the full (unedited) version of the advertisement in June 2005 for the same three newspapers was £2445.30.

Since the preparation of the previous report item, the circumstances have changed with the current temporary post holder (maternity cover) tendering her resignation on the 30th June with effect from the 31st July 2006. The NIO CSU have restated that no additional funding over and above the annual £40,000 package for the retention of the full time post will be made. They have agreed to permit any salary savings through the vacation of the temporary post to be used to fund any recruitment exercise. The vacation of the post will have serious repercussions regarding service delivery of the Community Safety Partnerships Action Plan and the spending of the 2006-2007 fund allocation.

Councillor McGuigan and Councillor Cavlan left the meeting during discussion on this matter

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

to recommend

- ***that the post of Community Safety Coordinator is designated job share***
- ***that a recruitment exercise be commenced without delay, with advertising costs being met from within the current annual funding from NIO CS***
- ***that a temporary project manager be selected via a recruitment agency with salary costs being met from within the current annual funding from NIO CSU.***

345.10.2 ***Resignation of District Environmental Health Officer***

Members were advised that Miss Elaine Stewart, District Environmental Health Officer has tendered her resignation from the above post on the 28th June with effect from the 31st July 2006. She takes up a similar post with Antrim Borough Council on the 1st August. Vacant of the post will severely affect the delivery of the Directorates' Environmental Health, Food and Health & Safety Service delivery plans. An advertisement campaign for a recruitment exercise has been priced and is identical as above. A price for a combined advertisement was also obtained and is set out below:

Single Advertisement EHO	£3075.88
Single Advertisement CSC	£3075.88
Total	£6151.76
Combined Advertisement	£5145.76
Total Saving	£1006.00

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

to recommend

- ***that the vacant District Environmental Health Officer post be filled and to this end a recruitment campaign be commenced without delay***

- ***that a combined advertisement be used to fill the vacancies as detailed above, with the costs being funded from within respective existing budgets***
- ***that a temporary Environmental Health Officer be selected via a recruitment agency with salary costs being met from within the current departmental budget, to minimise effect on service delivery.***

345.10.3 Premature Retirement on Grounds of Ill-Health

Following an extended absence of a Clerical Officer, and in consultation the postholder, a case was submitted to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee for consideration for premature retirement on grounds of ill health. The Doctor appointed by the Committee considers the employees incapacity to be permanent in character rendering her incapable of discharging her duties with efficiency. Notice of termination of employment with the Council has therefore been issued with effect from 1st August 2006.

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

to recommend

- ***that a letter of appreciation be forwarded to employee for the service given to the Borough Council.***
- ***that a recruitment exercise be commenced to replace this vacant full time permanent clerical officer post with costs being met from within existing departmental budget.***

345.10.4 Resignation – Part Time Kennel Helper

A vacancy has arisen due to the resignation of Ms. Maria Cassidy. Her employment with the Council terminated on Sunday 26th February 2006.

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

to recommend that a recruitment exercise be commenced to replace this vacant part-time permanent post based at Knock Road Dog Pound.

345.11 **Council Decision Making Structures**

Council, on the recommendation of the Committee decided that the committee structure should remain as follows, with the addition of An Audit Committee and Consultation Committee.

- o *Development Committee*
- o *Finance & General Purposes Committee*
- o *Leisure & Amenities Committee*
- o *Health & Environmental Services Committee*

Committees exist to consider policy and other matters within the remit of Council departments and provide recommendations to Council. The purpose in the proposal to change the name of this committee is to better describe what it does and align it with the new departmental structures

Finance is only one of the central services covered by the committee. While it is a major one, HR, IT, central administration and registration are important central services too and the purpose in changing that part of the name is to acknowledge all the central services and not only finance. It also aligns better with the Director's title and makes clear to staff and the public which committee deals with these services.

The proposal to include Corporate Services in the title is also to add clarity to what the committee covers. Corporate matters are managed within the Office of the Chief Executive and he, along with the DCLS, reports to this committee.

The other services within that Office of the Chief Executive are Development Services, which has a separate committee and Internal Audit, which also has its own committee. Planning and other consultation matters are now handled by the consultation committee.

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

to defer the decision on the committee name change to the September meeting of committee.

345.12 **National Association of Councillors – Membership**

The Association has agreed at its AGM that each Council in Northern Ireland be permitted to have four members appointed to the Association (presently three).

This matter was deferred from the last meeting for clarification on whether appointment of an additional member would increase the Council's contribution to the Association. The levy paid by Council, it is understood, covers all 16 members. Confirmation is awaited. The only additional cost to Council would appear to be the attendance & other expenses of the member attending meetings.

A further report will be made to committee when confirmation as to the position is received.

The current representatives are Alderman Cousley, Councillor McCamphill and Councillor Robinson.

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

to recommend that Alderman Simpson be appointed as a member of the Association.

345.13 Local Government Boundaries

The Local Government (Boundaries) (NI) Order 2006 provides for there to be seven local government districts in Northern Ireland. It also provides for the appointment of a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner to recommend the boundaries and names of the seven districts and the number, boundaries and names of the wards into which each of district is to be divided.

Mr Dick Mackenzie has been appointed Local Government Boundaries Commissioner and has commenced his task. A copy of the rules and criteria under which he will operate were circulated. Comments are invited.

Assistant Commissioners will also be appointed. The Commissioner plans to publish his provisional recommendations in September. A period of time will be allowed for representations, followed by hearings and publication of the final recommendations.

It was agreed:

to recommend that no specific comments be offered on the rules and criteria under which the Boundaries Commissioner was operating and the Commissioner's attention be drawn to the Council's opposition to the 7 Council Model, as provided for under the Boundaries Order 2006.

This concluded the business of the meeting, the time being 5.40pm.

Appendix A – Special Responsibility Allowance 2006/2007

Appendix B - Marketing Sub-Committee

APPENDIX B

**BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MARKETING SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date: 6th July 2006. 10.00 a.m.

Venue: Council Chamber, Riada House

Present: Cllr Patterson, Ald Campbell, Ald Cousley, Ald Simpson

In Attendance: The Mayor, Cllr Finlay

HCDS & CPO

1. - Official Opening of Riada Stadium

- name "Riada Stadium" agreed by Council
- revised dated Monday 31st July to coincide with NI Milk Cup agreed
- format of event agreed as follows
 - i. guests to be invited for 6.00 pm for pre-event reception in conference room, JDLC
 - ii. guests and public to be entertained by Brass Band at Stadium
 - iii. official opening to be performed by Gerry Armstrong, Asst Manager, NI Football Team, 7.00 p.m., followed by NI Milk Cup tournament elite group march (U19) N.I. v. Paraguay
 - iv. Civic Dinner in Town Hall (about 9.30 pm.)
 - v. Speeches: Mayor, Chair of LAC, G Armstrong and IFA President
- Agreed that since the spectators would have the opportunity to witness the opening and a number of NIMC matches at the new venue that no other public events be arranged.
- Guest list agreed
- Menu – buffet meal – agreed
- Caterer agreed – Events Co.
- Invite, Map, menu card and brochure approved
- Agreed no organised transport between venues
- Team and band hospitality agreed
- Plaque agreed – proof to be available for next meeting.

2. – Milk Cup Reception

- Tuesday evening 1st August allocated : Manchester Utd v. Co Tryone at Riada Stadium
- Usual buffet reception agreed to entertain visiting teams & NIMC Officials

Meeting concluded 11.00 a.m.