

BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting No. 915 held "in committee" in the Council Chamber, Borough Offices, Riada House, on Tuesday 2nd February 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

IN THE CHAIR: Alderman F Campbell, Mayor

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
H Connolly
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
J Simpson

Councillors
A Cavlan
J Finlay
R Halliday
B Kennedy
M McCamphill
A Patterson
E Robinson
I Stevenson

APOLOGIES: **Councillors**
P McGuigan
D McKay, MLA
T McKeown
M Storey, MLA

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Director of Borough Services
Director of Central & Leisure Service
Head of Corporate & Development Services

915.1 RATE ESTIMATE 2010-2011

The Chief Executive explained that Version 5 of the Rates Estimates book has a domestic rate increase of just under 10%. This is made up from: -

- An increased net cost of services of £436k, or £490k if loan charges are included; around £250k of that total is due to the increased cost of waste disposal and the cost of closing the landfill site.
- A reduction in general grant and balance applied of £208k and
- Partially offset by an increase of over 3% in the Estimated Penny Product.

To meet the 5% target, further savings of around £250k are required.

Reducing from 13% in book 4 to this figure has required pruning across services – the main measures were leaving the Tourism Co-Ordinator post unfilled, increasing income at the JDLC and cutting training for staff across all services.

Options for making further savings are listed on the papers included with the book. List of contributions made to outside bodies; about £102k of these are discretionary and could be saved. Pages setting out options for cuts to services total £96k. Revised paper shows the proposals put to the last meeting; two of them were deferred for further consideration, totalling £10k. Taken together these savings would add up to £208k or 4%. So the options could reduce the increase to around 6%.

Before looking at the options he suggested that the Director be allowed to explain how the figures for book 5 differ from Book 4 and that members' questions be taken.

In response to a question from a member the Chief Executive explained the procedure for recording "in committee" business and decisions and publication of minutes of such meetings, referring to Standing Orders, the 1972 Local Government Act and Code of Conduct.

Following a 10-minute adjournment the Mayor moved to the business of the meeting – consideration of the rate estimate book, version 5, dated 2nd February 2010, circulated.

The Director of Central & Leisure Services referred members to the general estimate of rates summary information contained in the book, pointing out that the rate increase had reduced from 13.04% to 9.97%. she presented the analysis of rate reductions included in version 5, as follows:

- Office of Chief Executive £17,914 - 0.33%
- Borough Services Directorate £8,140 – 0.15%
- Central & Leisure Services Directorate £77,541 – 1.46%
- 0.5% reduction in pay award £20,022 – 0.38%
- Reduction of contribution to build reserves £100,000 – 1.89%

The cost of loan charges to refinance capital expenditure £44,966 had been added (0.84%). The Director responded to members' questions and confirmed that the cost of the vacant Tourism Co-Ordinator post had been removed.

The Chief Executive presented paper, circulated, detailing possible contributions to other bodies, totalling £213,925 (£72,355 of these were statutory/contractual). Members were asked to note that the North Antrim Community Network had submitted an application for funding of £3,000 and that notice of withdrawal would be required if the Causeway Museum Service contribution was to be removed.

During the ensuing debate the Chief Executive and Directors responded to a range of budget issues which engaged members' attention, including reduction in building control income, waste collection and landfill site closure provision including advice on this matter from the Local Government Auditor, DOE guidance on working capital provision (5-7% of operating costs), economic benefits of various contributions, refinancing of loans, cost to Council of providing facilities and accommodation for events/meetings in addition to direct contributions to certain other bodies. Sports Advisory committee representatives confirmed that their sports awards were delivered through sponsorship secured and at no cost to Council.

* **During discussion Councillor Kennedy and Councillor Halliday left the meeting, at 12 noon and 12.10 p.m. respectively.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Arising from consideration of contributions to other bodies the Chief Executive declared an interest as his wife was a member of the twinning association.

Possible service savings options in the Office of the Chief Executive and two directorates were tabled, producing, if implemented, total potential savings as follows:

- Office of Chief Executive - £20,050 (option 1) or £15,100 (option 2)
- Borough Services Directorate (Amenities) - £62,584.55
- Central & Leisure Services Directorate (Good Relations/Community Sport & Leisure Centre) - £29,718 (option 1) or £27,218 (option 2)

The meeting also reviewed possible savings options in the Office of the Chief Executive, Borough Services and Central & Leisure Services deferred from Council meeting 11 January 2010.

- * **Councillor Stevenson and Councillor McCamphill left the meeting during consideration of the options, time: 1.10 p.m. and 1.20 p.m. respectively.**

The following savings were **AGREED**:

- **Office of Chief Executive:**
 1. Corporate Management – Marketing & Communications -£2,000
 2. Corporate Management – Internal Audit - £3,000

The meeting adjourned at 1.25 p.m. and reconvened at 2.30 p.m.

IN THE CHAIR: Alderman F Campbell, Mayor

PRESENT: **Aldermen**
C Cousley, MBE, Deputy Mayor
J Simpson

Councillors
A Cavlan
J Finlay
A Patterson
E Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Director of Borough Services
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Following further discussion when advice was given by Chief Executive and Directors as to consequences of options, information on building maintenance contracts included in budgets, building temperature levels, waste haulage and disposal costs, landfill closure provision, additional work under building regulations regarding energy efficient which was non-fee earning.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a number of options put forward from consideration of alternative means of service delivery/reduced service provision arose from the direction from Council to achieve savings on service costs and that the request to review overtime and agency costs was also being examined.

Arising from further consideration of the various options put forward by the Director of Central & Leisure Services on Good Relations programme, community support, leisure centre IT, it was **AGREED** that consideration of these be deferred.

During further consideration of the options for savings in the Office of the Chief Executive and the two Directorates, deferred from Council Meeting on 11 January party representatives put forward their views and the options were further deferred.

A number of members thanked officers for the work done and it was **AGREED** that Council meet again on 8th February at 7.00 p.m. to give further consideration to the draft rate estimate.

The meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.